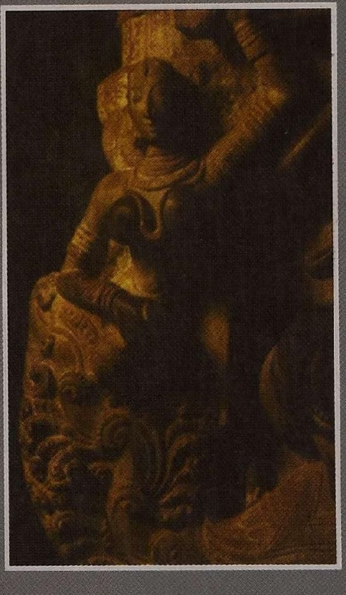
STUDIES IN MANIMEKALAI



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உலகத் தமிழாராய்ச்சி நிறுவனம்

INTERNATIONAL INSTITUTE OF TAMIL STUDIES

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BIBLIOGRAPHICAL DATA

Title of the Book	:	Studies in Maṇimēkalai
Author	:	Dr. N. Balusamy
Publisher & Copyright	:	International Institute of Tamil Studies, 2nd Main Road, C.P.T. Campus, Chennai - 600 113. Ph: 044-22542992
Publication No.	:	484
Language	:	English
Edition	:	Second Edition, First Edition 1965
Year of Publication	:	2004
Paper Used	:	18.6 TNPL Maplitho
Size of the Book	:	1/8 Demy
Printing type Used	:	10 points
No. of Pages	:	vi + 170
No. of Copies	:	500
Price	:	Rs. 70/- (Rupees Seventy Only)
Printing	:	Chennai Micro Print (P.) Ltd. Chennai - 29.
Subject	:	Studies in Manimekalai

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FOREWORD

Studies in Manimekalai is a Research Thesis for M.Litt. Degree approved by the University of Madras. The first publication was brought out by its author Dr. N. Balusamy M.A., B.L., M.Litt., M.Ed., Ph.D. way back in the Sixties. This book brings out all the salient details in a readable way although the last four chapters are very abtruse involving Buddhist Logic and Philosophy. The author has ably rendered those material in a way the students of Tamil Literature can easily understand. The copies were all sold out and the demand for its reprint was forth-coming from Research Scholars and other academics.

In view of the fact that it is a very useful addition to the University Libraries and the literary Public, the International Institute of Tamil Studies thought it fit to take up for a second edition with the willingness of the author. This was adjudged by the committee of experts as fit for reprint. I convey my sincere thanks to the publication committee which permitted to print and publish this book. The Institute is also thankful to the author.

Our sincere thanks are due to the Hon'ble Minister for Education Thiru. **S. Semmalai** and to Thiru. **P.A. Ramaiah** I.A.S., Secretary to Government, Tamil Development and Hindu Religious Endowments Department and Thiru. **T. Chandrasekaran** I.A.S., Special Secretary to Government, Tamil Development-Culture Department. They have evinced perennial interest in the qualitative improvement of this Institute and have rendered help in all possible ways.

I would also like to thank, Dr. A Thasarathan for proof reading and Mrs. N. Lakshmi, the D.T.P. Staff of this Institute for her laser typesetting. My thanks are also to the Chennai Micro Print (P.) Ltd. for the neat execution of this book.

Chennai **Director**
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FIRST EDITION
FOREWORD

Mr. N. Balusamy, M.A., Lecturer in Tamil of the Thiagarajar College, Madurai, is publishing the thesis entitled "Studies in Manimekalai" submitted by him and approved by the University of Madras for the M.Litt. Degree of the University. The book is an evidence of a careful study of the literature connected with Manimekalai and a close scrutiny of the work itself. The author has taken care to collect data relevant to the subject of his choice from several sources.

I am sure the book will serve as a profitable study of the Epic "Manimekalai" in its several aspects. The author has briefly examined the age of Manimekalai, but has brought out the epical qualities of Manimekalai in an interesting way. The socio-historical back-ground of the work has also been rummaged. Materials gleaned by the author for presenting the philosophical side of Manimekalai are also very useful. I congratulate the author on the success of his efforts.

(Sd.) A.c. Chettiar

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TRANSLITERATION

a	அ	ñ	ஞ்
ā	ஆ	ṭ	ட்
i	இ	ṇ	ண்
ī	ஈ	t	த்
u	உ	n	ந்
ū	ஊ	p	ப்
e	எ	m	ம்
ē	ஏ	y	ய்
ai	ஐ	r	ர்
o	ஒ	l	ல்
ō	ஓ	v	வ்
au	ஔ	ḻ	ழ்
k	க்	ḷ	ள்
ṅ	ங்	ṟ	ற்
c	ச்	ṉ	ன்

ABBREVIATIONS USED

Akam.	—	Akanāṉūṟu
Ch.	—	Chapter
Dhaṇḍi	—	Dhaṇḍi Alaṅkāram
Kali.	—	Kalittogai
Maṇi.	—	Maṇimēkalai
Puṟam.	—	Puṟanāṉūṟu
Perumpaṇ.	—	Perumpāṇāṟṟuppaḍai
Porunar.	—	Porunarāṟṟuppaḍai
Silap.	—	Silappathikāram
Tol.	—	Tolkāppiyam
Tiru.	—	Tirukkuṟaḷ

Wherever 'ch' is used in footnotes, it denotes the Chapter of the Maṇimēkalai. Numbers in Roman Figure denote the chapter numbers of the Maṇimēkalai. The ordinary numbers denote the lines of the verses or the chapters. For example, XXIX: 328 to 339 means lines 328 to 339 of the chapter XXIX of the Maṇimēkalai.

Chapter 1

THE BUDDHA AND HIS RELIGION

Gautama's Early Life

In the words of Dr. Edward J. Thomas, 'an account of a religion may be expected to begin with the biography of its founder',[1] hence a brief sketch of the Buddha's career. Gautama, the Buddha-to-be, was born in 563 B.C.[2] at Kapilavastu on the border of Nepal. His nickname was Siddhartha. His father, Suddhodana, the king of the Sakya Republic, brought him up amidst scenes of all kinds of luxury. He was strictly forbidden from having even the least opportunity of knowing, much less feeling, the pains and pathos, which claim the ordinary flesh their heir. In short, 'the cup of pleasure, surrounded by dancing girls, bewitching music, and delicious drinks, was full'[3], and the worldly woes and worries were totally absent within the imaginable limits of the boy's residential realms. But yet, to quote Mr. Christmas Humphreys,[4] "Gautama was a man, not a Solar Myth."

Young Gautama grew rolling on the unfailing lap of the Goddess seated on the Lotus Throne. As custom would have it, he was, though young, married to Yasodhara, a beautiful girl of the same clan. The king provided the couple with three big seasonal palaces devoid of any want. In spite of all these appurtenances and paraphernalia only

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1 The History of Buddhist Thought p. i.

2 The History of Culture of the Indian people (Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan) Vol. II. p. 365.

3 Dr. M.S. Vairanapillai's 'Concise World History' pp. 91 & 92.

4 Christmas Humphreys's Buddhism p. 26.

becoming of the person born with a silver spoon in his mouth, Prince Gautama, the Saviour-to-be, was of a reflective mould of mind. Occasionally, it is said, when he went out of the palace he came across a hag plodding her 'weary way', a sickly child unaided and uncared for, a dead body with a weeping band, and an emaciated labourer ploughing under the scorching sun. These deeply distressing sights produced a profound impression on his mind, and his speculation soared high intermittently kindling in him a desire to renounce the worldly pleasures. By then, a son, Rahula by name, was born to him. Thinking for himself that he would thereafter tend to fall into the vicious toils of worldly attachment, he ultimately decided to leave the palace and the family. This momentous departure of his from the 'Regal House' is styled as the 'Great Renunciation'.

The Enlightenment

Now, the ascetic Gautama wandered from place to place in search of a solution to the worldly misery. Holding steadfast to his unassailable resolve of seeking enlightenment, he inflicted on his mortal body a series of unbearable hardships such as 'performing terrible austerities, long fasts and painful exercises'[5]. As a result of this sort of asceticism, he not only did not achieve his object, but also his body became hopelessly weak yielding fast to lassitude of spirit. So he gave up asceticism and began to think of an alternative to it. At last he found contemplation and meditation as the surest ways to attain enlightenment. While in contemplation, under a pipal tree, in the last watch of the night, "ignorance was destroyed, knowledge had arisen... as I sat there, earnest strenuous, resolute"[6]. Gautama now did attain *bodhi* and became the Buddha of the Enlightened One.

Thus, Gautama, having routed Mara, the god of evil, and ultimately having attained the Supreme Knowledge set out on his travels with a view to preaching his philosophy. He first went to Banaras, a centre of learing from times of yore, and gathered a band of five monks as his devoted

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5 Dr. Tara Chand's "Short History of the Indian people" pp. 55 & 56.

6 The UNESCO Courier, June 1956 p. 5.

disciples. Along with them, he moved on and on, and during the course of his ramblings, more and more of people swelled the congregation of the laity. After many years of energetic wandering and incessant preaching he reached Kusinagara and there he somehow felt, at his eightieth year (493 B.C.) that his end was near at hand. So he called Ananda, his personal attendant to his bed-side and through him the clergy and the laity, and uttered the following last words: "Now, monks, I have nothing more to tell you but that all that is composed is liable to decay. Strive after salvation energetically".[7]

The Buddhist Scriptures

Before we straightaway embark upon a critical study and assessment of the nature and scope of the Buddhistic ideals enshrined in the romantic epic, namely the *Manimekalai,* a general account of the popular aspects of Buddhism gleaned from the Buddhist Agamas or Scriptures is only within the realm of propriety. It, therefore, behoves us here, at the outset, to mention the authorities or the recorded Scriptures which broadly speak of the rules and injunctions governing the conduct of the Buddhist Clergy and the systematised truths of Buddhism. The entire collection of the Buddhist Scriptures[8] extant to-day comprises three parts, technically called the Tripitakas, otherwise known as the Three Baskets. These Pitakas contain the precious and noble sayings and sermons of a galaxy of teachers and the taught from time immemorial. They are[9],

(i) The Vinaya-pitaka or the Book of Discipline.

(ii) The Sutta-pitaka or the Book of Discourses and

(iii) The Abhidhamma-pitaka or the Book on Philosophy

The Scriptures were originally written in the Pali language. This collection is known as the Canonical literature. The Vinaya consists of all that pertains to the

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7 2500 years of Buddhism p. 29, Edited by Prof. P.V. Bapat.

8 Buddhism, its history & literature pp. 55 & 56 by T.W. Rhys Davids.

9 2500 years of Buddhism p. 139, Edited by Prof. P.V. Bapat.

order of the Mendicant Recluses, and how the Order was brought into being and also the rules that the Brethren and Sisters should enjoin on themselves. The Sutta reveals the truths of the religion and the psychological system on which those truths are based. The Abhidhamma deals with the details of that psychological system.

Religious Doctrines

"The Buddha did not preach anything absolutely new. He was disgusted with the orthodox Vedic ritual, with the sacrifices in which animals were butchered, with the rigidity of the caste system and with the supremacy of the Brahmandom. The Buddha himself speaks in very high and respectable terms about a true Brahman whom he regards as an ideal saint who has done away with all sins and ignorance and who shines with the height of pure wisdom".[10] The Buddha said, "A man does not become a Brahman by his family or by birth. In whom there is truth and righteousness, he is blessed; he is a Brahman. The man who is angry and bears hatred, who harms living things, who speaks falsely, who exalts himself and despises others -let me know him as an outcaste."[11]

Thus, "the reform of the Buddha had originally much more of a social than of a religious character."[12] In this connection, it would only be proper and just to quote Dr. Chandradhar Sharma who has observed, "The Buddha was primarily an ethical teacher and social reformer rather than a theoretical philosopher. He referred to a number of philosophical views prevalent in his time and condemned them as futile. Whenever metaphysical questions were put to him, he avoided them by saying that they were neither profitable nor conducive to the highest good. "Human existence is full of misery and pain. Our immediate duty, therefore, is to get rid of this misery and pain".[13] To the Buddha, "reason was to be used as a sharp tool for cutting

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10 Dialectic in Buddhism and Vedanta p. 15 by Dr. Chandradhar Sharma.

11 Quoted in "Concise World History" pp. 94 & 95 by Dr. M.S. Vairanapillai.

12 Studies in Buddism p. 7 by F. Max Muller.

13 Dialectic in Buddhism & Vedanta pp. 13 & 14.

away the undergrowth in one's own thinking, not for hacking at opponents. Sixty two Schools of Philosophy were holding forth in Gauthama's part of the world. He refused to be drawn into their bickerings. Man's true end was to achieve liberation from the bondage of the finite world. That could not be realised if one sold his soul for a mess of metaphysical pottage or name and fame in the schools."[14]

So, the teachings of the Buddha were very simple and easily understandable to the masses. They consist of four noble truths namely,

(i) Existence is unhappiness.
(ii) Unhappiness is caused by selfish craving.
(iii) Selfish craving can be destroyed, and
(iv) Destruction can be effected through the eight-fold path and the eight-fold path is as follows:

  (i) Right belief
  (ii) Right thought
  (iii) Right speech
  (iv) Right action
  (v) Right means of livelihood
  (vi) Right effort
  (vii) Right remembrance
  (viii) Right meditation

Apart from these rules for the laymen, the Buddha promulgated a ten-fold path to the clergy. They were,

(i) Not to kill
(ii) Not to steal
(iii) Not to commit adultery
(iv) Not to lie
(v) Not to get intoxicated
(vi) To abstain from unseasonable meals
(vii) To abstain from public spectacles

14 The meaning of life in Hinduism and Buddhism p. 93 by Floyd H.Ross.

(viii) To abstain from expensive dresses

(ix) Not to have a large bed

(x) Not to receive silver or gold

These rules and regulations have been recognised as fundamental by all schools or sects of Buddhism. Although Buddhism began as a simple Code of morals and ethics and a system of quietism, very soon "it inherited and took for granted many of the Hindu dogmas, the belief in rebirth Karma and cosmological theories."[15] "Ethically it sought, reform in rejecting the authority of the Vedas and in teaching an independent morality, and philosophically in denying any permanent substratum in the world or in any of the gods of the Vedic pantheon."[16]

In the scheme of his religious order, the Buddha emphasised the fact that one should always train one's mind and body in strict adherence to the ethical standards. Ritualism was condemned by him as unmeritorious, because it involved the killing of animals. The virtue of all virtues was to seek shelter under the Tri-ratna or the three jewels namely, the Buddha, the Dhamma and the Order. The Buddha accepted the theory of Karma. According to him Karma is not predestined by some mysterious power to which we must helplessly and hopelessly submit ourselves. "Involuntary or unconscious acts are not treated as Karma."[17] As for realising the ideal of the Nirvana or salvation, a constant spiritual exercise and contemplation are required. The spiritual aspirant is expected to cultivate four noble sentiments namely (i) Universal love, (ii) Compassion, (iii) Sympathetic Joy, and (iv) Equanimity. These sentiments should know no bounds of time, space or class. So far, the essentials of the Buddhist religion have been broadly explained.

Two Orders

After the passing away of the Master, or as soon as "the lamp of wisdom had been blown out by the wind of

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15 The History of Buddhist Thought, p. 13 by Dr. Edward J. Thomas.

16 Encyclopaedia Britannica, Vol. 4, p. 325.

17 2500 years of Buddhism p. 32 Edited by Prof. P.V. Bapat.

impermanence",[18] his disciples convened a series of Councils to settle the contents of the three Pitakas or of the Canonical Literature. A section among them considered the existing rules and regulations too irksome to follow, and therefore wanted some relaxation. Now, a cleavage or a schism arose amongst themselves and soon they separated themselves into two groups namely the orthodox group and the progressive group. The orthodox disciples belonged to the Southern School and the progressive belonged to the Northern School. The doctrines of these Southern and Northern schools were popularly known as Hinayanism and Mahayanism respectively. "Yana" means a way or Vehicle; "Maha", means 'great' as contra-distinguished from 'Hina' meaning "small". "The terms were invented by Mahayanists who claimed that theirs was a career or course of life large enough to bear all mankind to salvation: the Hinayanists called themselves the Theravadins, the followers of the Doctrine of the Elders and claimed to teach the Buddha way as pointed out by the Master."[19]

Striking a strong note of difference between the two orders, Heinrich Zimmer observed, "Relations between Buddhism and Hinduism were peaceful, but between the Mahayana and the Hinayana, scholastic debate and mutual abuse, on the verbal level, were at such a pitch that the Buddha himself, had he returned, must certainly have been compelled to cry out piteously as eleven centuries before: "The order is divided! The order is divided!"[20] But this seems to be rather an exaggerated statement, for an impassionate and comparative study of the tenets of these two schools of thought only suggests that both are complementing each other, and "Mahayana" is the extension of Hinayana and not its replacement.[21] In corroboration of this view, Dr. McGovern has said, "While Hinayana regards Mahayana as corruption of the original Buddhism, or at the best a false and decadent branch, Mahayana regards Hinayana not as false or contrary to true Buddhism, but simply as incomplete,

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18 Quoted in "Indian Philosophy" Vol. I p.343 by Dr. S. Radhakrishnan.

19 Buddhism pp. 47 & 48 by Christmas Humphreys.

20 Philosophies of India pp. 510 & 511 by Heinrich Zimmer Edited by Joseph Campbell.

21 Buddhism p. 50 by Christmas Humphreys.

or the superficial doctrine which Sakyamuni taught to those who were incapable of comprehending the more profound truths of Mahayana."[22] Dr. Suzuki has further supported this view in clear terms by writing, "There are not two Buddhisms: the Mahayana and the Hinayana are one, and the spirit of the founder of Buddhism prevails in both."[23]

Doctrinal Differences

But yet one cannot deny the existence of the sharp difference between Hinayanism and Mahayanism. It will be useful here for our purpose to bring out those doctrinal differences in a broad way thus: Dr. S. Radhakrishnan has observed, "When Buddhism became universal in spirit and embraced large masses, the Hinayana could not serve. A religion more catholic that the Hinayana, a less ascetic ideal was required."[24] This requirement was amply met by the Mahayana in that "it imitated the successful experiments of Hinduism embodied in the theism of the Yoga, of the later Upanishads and of the Bhagavadgita"[25]. "The ultimate good of an adherent of the Hinayana is to attain his own Nirvana or Salvation, whereas the ultimate goal of those who professed the Mahayana creed was not to seek their own salvation, but to seek the salvation of all beings."[26] During the life-time of the Buddha, according to Dr. S. Radhakrishnan, "men were not wanting who paraded the gods as the creators of the world, and governors of the universe, able to effect for good or ill the destiny of man".[27] So the early Buddhism or the Hinayana was inclined "to destroy the gods once and for all".[28] The Buddha, throughout his sojourn, was an ordinary human being preaching an ethical doctrine, but afterward he was raised to divinity and regarded as a Saviour. "The Mahayana sect went even further by transforming Buddhism into a purley

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22 Introduction to Mahayana Buddhism p. 123.

23 The development of Mahayana Buddhism: from Buddhist review Vol. I 1969.

24 Indian Philosophy Vol. I. 590.

25 Ibid p. 591

26 A History of Indian Philosophy Vol. I. p. 126 by S. Dasgupta.

27 Indian Philosophy Vol.I. p. 453.

28 Ibid p. 453.

theistic doctrine, and creating an enormous pantheon of deities to be worshipped."[29] When questions relating to God, Soul and Matter were put to the Buddha, he answered them by his silence. This silence according to the Mahayana, signifies the fact that these antinomies, in the last analysis cannot be solved by intellect. But Hinayana misinterprets his silence as signifying the denial of God, Soul and Matter.

The tenets of Hinayanism are said to be cast in the negative, whereas Mahayanism preaches that Nirvana or Salvation is not a negative cessation of misery, but a positive state of boundless joy. The Bodhisattva ideal is one of the main ingredients of the Mahayanism, according to which a Bodhisattva is bound to defer his own Nirvana in order to work for that of others. The Mahayana faith is a "progressive and dynamic religion which throbs with vitality, because it has the capacity to adapt itself to the changing environmental conditions, preserving its essentials intact".[30] Having enumerated the main points of difference in regard to the doctrines of the Hinayana and the Mahayana, one has to remember, at the same time, that the basic principles of these two schools of thought are, by and large, the same. The four noble Truths, and the importance of the ethical and moral code, and the famous Middle Path, all these and the like not only go to constitute the hard core of the Hinayana, but also they are the warp and woof of the Mahayana.

The Spread of Buddhism

Before we conclude, a brief analysis of the main causes for the spread of Buddhism will not be out of place here. Dr. P.C. Alexander admirably sums up the causes:[31]

1. The novelty in its teachings and forms of worship.

2. Humanitarian work the Monks readily undertook among the people, like providing amenities for the poor,

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29 The life of Buddha retold from ancient sources p.184 by Anil De. Silva Vigier.

30 Dialectic in Buddhism and Vedanta p. 15 by Dr. Chandradhar Sharma.

31 Buddhism in Kerala pp. 139. 140 & 169.

giving medical aid to men and animals, digging wells, planting trees, etc., won a very large number of followers.

3. It afforded social equality to all its adherents without any distinction of caste. It presented an opportunity to the masses to escape from the hatred and humiliating position of being 'low castes'.

4. The Vedic religion with its narrow and rigid sectarianism could not compete with this new popular religion.

5. The policy of the Buddhist monks everywhere was to preach their religion in the language of the people in their particular localities.

Chapter 11

TAMIḺAKAM BEFORE AND AFTER THE ADVENT OF BUDDHISM

Sources of History

The literature of a country is one of the main sources from which its history can be gleaned with profit. This is particularly so in regard to the history of Tamiḻakam, for, we have no other recorded sources to build up its ancient history. So, it has been rightly observed: "The ancient Tamil Classics are unique among the literary works of the Dravidians for their antiquity as well as for their quality. Further, they contain true and lively pictures of the life of the Tamil people in a period for which we have no other sources of information; their great value to the historian lies in the fact that most of them are transcripts from the life".[1] It is no doubt that we have a large volume of classical Tamil works which abundantly supply very reliable historical material. The Tolkāppiyam, the most ancient and extant Tamil grammar, and other Sangam works like the Tirukkuṟaḷ, the Eṭṭuttokai and the Pattupāṭṭu are all considered by the historians as sufficiently reliable for constructing the history of South India, especially Tamiḻakam. Dr. K.K. Pillai[2] considers Puṟanāṉūṟu, one of the Eṭṭuttokai works, as a valuable document supplying mostly reliable historical material and his observation can be safely extended to apply to the remaining Sangam works of that series also, namely Patiṟṟuppattu, Naṟṟiṇai, Kuṟuntokai etc. etc.

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1 The Kaveri, the Maukharis and the Sangam Age p. 1 by T.G. Aravamudhan (Madras University Publication).

2 'Puṟanāṉūṟu and the history of the ancient Tamils' in The Madurai Tamil Sangam Golden Jubilee Number, 1956 pp. 83 & 84.

The Sangam Age

In the history of Tamil Literature, the Sangam Age can be rightly styled as the Golden Age of the Tamils. The extant literature of this period serves as an unfailing fountain source of the varied and variegated aspects of the Tamilian life as a whole. In short, the Sangam Literature is a rich repository of our past, and an approach to which at once brings forth a multitude of ideas and ideals that are mostly communicable to all times and to all climes. To say this is no exaggeration, and Tamil Literature of this period is an exception to that ingenuous statement of Dr. Samuel Johnson, "All perhaps are more willing to honour past than present excellence; and the mind contemplates genius through the shades of age, as the eye surveys the sun through the artificial opacity."[3] Further, the Sangam Literature, which unsurpassed by any other foreign literature that arose during this period (from pre-historic times down to 300 A.D.) make a subtle difference in that it is a great confluence of more than one science and one art. References regarding the Polity, Economy, Culture, Art and Fine Arts and Sciences, such as Astronomy, Botany and Zoology etc., are found in sufficiently large measure in Tamil Literature and hence the indispensability of delving deep into the mysteries of the Sangam literature for knowing anything about the Tamils of the age at issue.

The Land of the Tamils

The term *Tamiḻakam* means a territory where the Tamil Language was in prevalence. "That part of the Indian peninsula which the Indo-Aryans called the Dravida was known to ancient Tamils as the Tamiḻakam or the abode of the Tamils."[4] This vast land of ours in which we now live was invariably called in those days as Tamiḻakam, Tamil Nadu and Tamil World (Ulakam). The Sangam Celebrities, one after another, have freely used hence terms in their works whenever mention was to be made about their motherland. This makes us understand that an extent of land which a particular community of people, politically well

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3 Preface to Shakespeare p. 1 para 2.

4 Tamil Studies p. 8 by M. Srinivasa Iyengar.

organised among themselves, inhabited, was named after the language which they used to speak from their very birth. This fact is corroborated and positively proved by another reference in one of the Sangam works namely *Kuṟuntokai.* In the hey day of the Tamils, foreign merchants from Greece and Rome on the West, and Burma and China on the East used to frequent the cities and sea-ports of the Tamil Country in large numbers and carried on their trade and commerce with the result that Tamil Nadu, particularly Kavirippūmpaṭṭiṉam, the then famous capital of the great Cholas, served as a meeting place of the East and the West. Some of these foreign merchants permanently settled on the Tamil soil and they were called by the natives by the name *Moḻipeyar Tēyattār.*[5] That is to say that they were named after the language of the region whence they hailed.

Boundaries of Tamil Nadu

The ancient Tamil country or the pre-Buddhist and the post Buddhist Tamiḻakam was surrounded on all the four sides by natural boundaries, the Vēṅkaṭam (The Tirupati Hills) in the north, the Arabian sea in the west, the Indian Ocean in the south, and the Bay of Bengal in the east. Paṉampāraṉār, a contemporary of Tolkāppiyaṉār, and Iḷaṅgō Adikaḷ, the famous author of the Silappatikāram respectively speak of the boundaries of Tamiḻakam as follows:

"Vada Vēṅkaṭam Teṉkumari
Āyidait
Tamiḻ Kūṟu Nallulakam".[6]

(The good world of the Tamils lies between the Northern Vēṅkaṭam and the Southern Kumari).

"Nediyōṉ Kunramum Todiyōḷ Pauvamum
Tamiḻ Varambarutta Taṇpuṉaṉādu".[7]

(The cool country of the Tamils bounded by Vishnu's or Tirumāl's hill and bangled lady's ocean-Kumari). The western and the eastern boundaries of Tamiḻakam are also

5 Kuṟuntokai, Stanza II.

6 Tol. Pāyiram 11. 1 to 3.

7 Silap. Vēṉil II. 1 & 2.

supported by a mountain system on each side respectively called the Western Ghats and the Eastern Ghats. Having been surrounded by natural boundaries on all sides Tamil̠akam was a well-knit, compact territory which was an independent geographical unit by itself.

The Polity : Monarchy

Going back to the Sangam Literature, we see that the most ancient form of Government known to the Tamils was monarchy. "They did not think much about the form of Government or its character. Dispersed as they were in the country, they needed strong protection from robbers within and enemies from without, and what was therefore required was a strong Government capable of giving such protection to them. Hence the people found it to their advantage to submit to the leadership of a man capable of giving them the required protection. In this way hereditary dynastic leadership developed into a monarchical institution... ... ... Monarchy was a political necessity".[8] The whole of the Tamil Country was, broadly speaking, under the three independent royal families namely the Cērās, the Cōl̠as and the Pāṇḍyās.[9] Roughly the present Thirunelvely, Madurai and Ramanathapuram Districts comprised the Pāṇḍ̄ya Country, Thiruchirappally, Tanjore and part of South Arcot Districts, the Cōl̠ā Country, and the Travancore - Cochin State, South Malabar and South Canara Districts formed the Cērā Country. For some time another royal family by name the Thoṇḍaimāns flourished and ruled over the present Chittoor, Chengalput and part of North Arcot District.

Tamil City-States

Thus we see four distinct royal families independent of one another ruling over the vast portions of the ancient Tamil country. Besides them, we also see that there was another category of rulers, some of them sometimes being more powerful and more influential than the crowned kings themselves. They were known as *'vēḷir'* or chieftains. There seems to have been a network of such chieftaincies

8 South Indian Polity p. 6 by Dr. T.V. Mahalingam.

9 Tol. Seyyuḷ 1336.

interspersed by the above mentioned four kingdoms.[10] These chieftaincies or small states, on a critical examination, appear to be very similar to what were called the city-states of ancient Greece. A city-state according to the Greek conception, should have four characteristics. In the first place, a city-state was one which had its capital city surrounded by a few or more small cities or towns under a chieftain or ruler. Secondly, the capital of the city-state was invariably located or built upon the summit of a hillock, or in the vicinity of a mountain. Thirdly, there was practically no connection between one city-state and another, and the people were highly freedom-loving and liberty conscious. Lastly, every state was having its own army.

Keeping these characteristics of a Greek city-state in mind, let us cite a few instances and illustrate that there were city-states in the ancient Tamil Country also. For instance, we come across a small and compact state called the *'Parambu Nāḍu'* on the map of the ancient Tamil country ruled by a chieftain named Pāri Vaḷḷal. This Parambu Nāḍu (State) had exactly 300 villages,[11] the capital of which was located on the top of the Parambu hill. He had a well-trained, loyal army of his owing military allegiance to none. His people were so extraordinarily freedom-loving as to rise against the three Tamil Kings (Cērā, Cōḷā & Pāṇḍyās) when they once fought with Pāri, and his soldiers preferred sacrifice of their all to servitude. Similarly, Aṇḍiran of the Podiyil hills, Atannuṅkan of the Thirupati hills, Atiyamān of the *'Kuthiraimalai'*, Pēkan of the Palani hills located their capitals on the respective hills and ruled over some parts of the Tamil country. These Chieftaincies exactly compare with the city-states of Greece.

Apart from the chieftains, there were certain over-lords. They were enjoying the revenues of some villages. Those over-lords did not have independent status and they were subservient to the crowned monarchs. In times of emergency and war, these lords were bound to help their

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10 South Indian Polity pp. 3 & 4 by Dr. T.V. Mahalingam

11 Puram 110

12 Ibid

respective kings with men and money.[13] Kōyamān of Ēñchūr,[14] (Coimbatore District) Nākan of Nālūr[15] (Aruppukkōṭṭai Taluk) and Kāriyāṭi of Malli[16] (Srivilliputtūr Taluk) were, for instance, such over-lords who owed allegiance to the Cōḻā and Pāṇḍyā kings in ancient times.

Administrative Units

Thus, we see in the Tamil Country during the Sangam period, three kinds of rulers, the crowned kings with undivided sovereignty, the independent chieftains and the over-lords who were under the hegemony of the sovereign rulers. With a view to maintaining proper control and justice to be meted out then and there to the people, each kingdom was administratively divided into small and handy units. The Cērā country was divided into three, namely the Kuḍa Nāḍu, the Kuṭṭa Nāḍu, and the Porai Nadu; the Pāṇḍya country was of five divisions such as Madurai, Mōhūr, Paḻayan̲ūr regions etc., and the Cōḻā country as the Pukār region and the Uṟaiyūr region.

The chief of Kuḍa Nāḍu was known as Kuḍakkō or Kuḍavarkōn̲; that of Kuṭṭa Nāḍu as Kuṭṭuvan̲ or Kuṭṭuvan̲ Kōtai; and that of Poṟai Nāḍu was known as Poṟai or Irumpoṟai. The names of kings like Cēramān̲ Kuḍakkō, Neḍuñcēralātan̲, Cēran̲ Ceṅkuṭṭavan̲, Kōpperuñcēral Irumpoṟai, and Kaṇaikkal Irumpoṟai are instances indicative of the above divisions. A Pāṇḍyan̲ King was praised by the Poet as "Pañcavar Ēṟē".[17] (the Lord of the five-fold men). This suggests the division of the Pāṇḍyā Kingdom into five administrative zones. The division of the Cōḻā country into two parts is borne out by the fact that Nalaṅkiḷḷi and Neḍuṅkiḷḷi were both ruling at the same time,[18] the former having Pukār as his royal seat, and the latter having Uṟantai or Uṟaiyūr.

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13 Puṟam 179

14 Ibid 180. ⎫

15 Ibid 179. ⎬ Avvai. S. Doraisamy Pillai's Instroduction

16 Ibid 177. ⎭

17 Ibid 58.

18 Puṟam, Stanza 45.

The crowned kings used to stay in their respective capital cities, and deputies were appointed, mostly drawn from their kinsfolk, at other centres. These deputies may be likened to our present state Governors. From this political arrangement, we have many lessons to learn. Though this arrangement was wholesome for administrative purposes, there were also certain weaknesses inherent in it. The Tamil Kings and the chieftains failed, it may be said, to bring into being a strong central Government for common defence. Had they done it, the history of South India, particularly Tamil India, would have been quite different from what it is today.

Geographical Regions

The ancient Tamiḻakam was divided into four geographical regions, and this holds good even now. The four regions were, the pastoral, the agricultural, the mountainous and the coastal.[19] Though these divisions are universal, the Tamil Genius conceived this as part and parcel of the Tamilian life as such. The term *Nānilam* often referred to in Tamil works means, in general, the world and particularly the Tamil World. In pre-historic times it is said, the people were divided into a number of tribes. The main differences between them were largely due to the geographical features. The important tribes or groups were the agriculturists, the pastoralists, the huntsmen and the fishermen. Later, a fifth region was added to, namely the desert region and the people of that region were called the maṟavars or eyinars. The mountainous, the coastal and the desert regions did not yield any valuable food and other things which could make others jealous and cast evil eyes on them. So, in these three regions leadership might have emerged; but it did not result in Kingship.[20] Only the agricultural and the pastoral people did have some properties like foodstuffs and the livestock. These people, therefore, needed strong leadership to protect their properties.

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19 Tol. Akattiṇai Sutram, 5.

20 Tamiḻaka Āṭci p. 18 by Dr. M. Rajamanikkanar.

Kingship

"In the earliest phases of human history the tribes into which society was divided were very often fighting with one another; and for that purpose each tribe submitted to the leadership of a person. Thus, war be-got leadership which, in due course, developed into Kingship. In the pastoral and the agricultural regions, this appears to have been the usual course; the king was called the Kō and Kō<u>n</u>, both meaning Cowherd."[21] In prehistoric times when the society was tribal in character, the relationship between the leader and the people was personal; but when the tribal leadership became Kingship, the relationship between the King and the people was territorial owing loyalty to the King and to his Kingdom.

The institution of Kingship is referred to in the Tolkāppiyam, the earliest of the whole literary production of the Ṯamils, and in the Tirukkuṟaḷ, the next in point of time. In the former work, the King is called by such names as *arasan,*[22] Vēndan,[23] and *Mannan,*[24] and in the latter, in addition to these, *nilam-āḷpavan,*[25] *iṟai,*[26] *Kāvalan,*[27] *Kōlan,*[28] *Vēlan,*[29] are terms employed to mean the king. Now a study of these terms will, in a way, give us the nature and functions of the king in ancient times. *Arasan* means a *Rāj* or the *King* who presides over the destinies of his subjects. *Mannan* is one who endures long and remains as long as the people or his subjects remain loyal; *Vēndan,* is a derivative from the root *Vemmai*[30] meaning liking or loving and therefore, he who is loved and liked by the people is *Vēndan; nilam-āḷpavan* refers to one who rules over a particular territory

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21 South Indian Polity p. 11, by Dr. T.V. Mahalingam.

22 Tol. Puṟattiṇai - 20.

23 Ibid. Akattiṇai - 30.

24 Ibid, Puṟattiṇai - 7.

25 Tirukkuṟaḷ 383.

26 Ibid. 388.

27 Ibid. 560.

28 Ibid. 560.

29 Tirukkuṟaḷ 552.

30 Tol. Uri - 36.

generally in times of peace; *Iṟai* is derived from the root *Iṟu* meaning "to exist everywhere or to be omnipresent" and therefore he who is clothed with godliness by virtue of his deeds is known as *Iṟai; Kāvalaṉ* is one who protects the people and their belongings; *Kōlaṉ* and *Vēlaṉ* are important terms that describe the two-fold function of the King. *Kōlaṉ* is derived from *kol* which means to *kill* or *to destroy* and *Vēlaṉ* is a derivative from *Vel* meaning to *subdue* or to *conquer.* Thus, these two words suggest that the King has to conquer the enemies from without, and destroy or inflict capital punishment on the unsocial and the anti-socio-national elements from within with a strong will.[31]

Duties and Responsibilities of the King

So, the King's area of duties and responsibilities had far more widened during the time of Thiruvaḷḷuvar than during the time of Tolkāppiyar. The king was the Head of the State which consisted of six elements namely the army, the people, the wealth, the counsel, the friends and the fort.[32] He was considered to be a diviine personality. The Tolkappiyam enjoins on the King certain duties like learning, sacrificing, patronizing poets and scholars, protecting the people and punishing the evil-doers. He was entitled to possess army, flag, umbrella, drum, cavalry, elephantry, chariot, garland, crown and the scepter and the like.[33] He was considered as the very life of the state and the people. Puṟanāṉūṟu, on the anthologies of the Sangam age bears ample testimony to it; "Even paddy is not life, nor the water; the King is the very life of this vast world. So, it is his duty to realise, "I am the live-nerve of the body-politic".

The king was expected to possess certain essential characteristics: Fearlessness, liberality, intellect and diligence are the unfailing virtues of a King; alertness, learning and bravery should adorn him. He who knows how to increase the sources of revenue, how to enrich his treasury, how to preserve and to expand his wealth is best

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31 Tirukkuṟaḷ - 550.

32 Ibid. 381.

33 Tol. Marapu 72.

34 Puṟam 186.

fitted to be a King. He should be easily accessible. He who heeds advice, though bitter, of his friends will bring even the whole world under his umbrella".[35] Thus, the Tirukkuṟaḷ attaches more importance to the moral and ethical side of the man in the King than the King himself. Confucious rightly observed: "When the men are gone good government decays and becomes extinct. With the right men, the growth of good government is as rapid as the growth of vegetation is in the right soil; indeed good government is like a fast growing plant. The conduct of government, therefore, depends upon the man. The right men are obtained by the ruler's personal character"[36].

Causes of Wars

In the ancient Tamiḻakam was usually and largely considered as an outlet for the King's innate and hidden prowess and valour. Battles were fought to keep the enemies off the national frontiers. Sometimes, territorial ambition also was the motif force for wars.[37] Wars were waged by the *Vēḷirs* or the Tamil Chieftains against the crowned Kings to gain supremacy. Malayamāṉ Tirumudikkāṟi, Adikamāṉ Neḍumāṉ Añchi and Pāri were some of the Vēḷirs who rose in revolt against the crowned kings, and failed to achieve their object.[38] There was yet another cause for warfare in Tamiḻakam. Even among the crowned kings, the Cērās, the Pāṇḍyās and the Cōḻās, there was at times a very keen competition to establish political supremacy throughout the country. The much talked of battle fought at Talayālaṅkāṉam between Pāṇḍyaṉ Neḍuñceḻiyaṉ on the one side, and seven others including the Cērā and Cōḻā Kings on the other, was nothing but a sheer indication of the desire on the part of the Pāṇḍyā King to extend his influence and to impose his suzerainty on others.[39] But the disheartening note of disharmony between the Tamil Kings did not in any way deter them from giving a common resistance to the enemies

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35 Tirukkuṟaḷ Chapter - 39.

36 Man and Man : The Social Philosophers p. 332 Edited by Saxe Commins & Robert N. Linscott.

37 Puṟam 8.

38 Teṉṉāṭṭup Pōrkkaḷaṅgaḷ p. 89 by Sri K. Appadurai.

39 Puṟam 19.

from without. Instances are not wanting in the Tamil classics to show that the three kings pooled their defence resources under a common banner in which all the three emblems namely the fish, the tiger and the bow were inscribed and marched onward to meet the enemies right in their territories.[40]

Succession

"With the development of monarchy as a settled institution, the principles of heredity came to be largely followed with regard to the succession to the throne".[41] As custom would have it, the eldest son of the King by his chief queen succeeded to the throne. But sometimes, the brother of the crowned King, in spite of his sons, ascended the throne. This is borne out by the fact that although the Cēra King, Imayavaramban̲ Neḍuñcēralātan had three sons, his brother Palyān̲aic Celkel̲u Kuṭṭuvan̲ became the King. After him only, according to the patikams of the Patir̲r̲uppattu,[42] Neḍuñcēralātan̲'s sons one after another, succeeded to the throne. So, it seems that there was no rule in the ancient Tamil̲akam regarding succession issue. Irrespective of the Kingship and the nature of relationship, it may be presumed, the throne went to the eldest member of the royal family.[43] Further, there does not appear to have been any strict rule regarding the age for coronation. Even young princes were crowned kings,[44] while the actual administration was carried on by the ministers. So far, we have discussed the Tamilian Polity and the next in order, namely the Economy of Tamil̲ Nāḍu has to be discussed in the following paragraphs.

The Economy : The importance of Wealth

References in the Tamil literary works in regard to the economy of the Tamils are frequent and many. No race could have realised the importance of wealth and finance in this mundane life so much as the Tamils. They were

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40 Silap. Kāṭchi 170 to 172.

41 South Indian Polity p. 31 by Dr. T.V. Mahalingam.

42 Patikams 3 to 6.

43 Pur̲am 75.

44 Maṇimēkalai Kathai 4 : 11. 107 & 108.

a matter-of-fact people wedded to earn and enrich themselves. The Tolkāppiyam enjoins on the householder a duty to depart from his home in order that he may seek wealth to carry on his domestic life in all its glory.[45] The Kuṟaḷ extols the value of the wealth".[46] "There is nothing other than wealth which turns a man of no worth into one of great worth", and also "Make wealth, for it is the steel that cuts the very pride of the foes; and there is nothing sharper than that".

In the Tirukkuṟaḷ as many as ten words are used to denote wealth.[47] They are Poruḷ, Uḍaimai, Ākkam, Celvam, Perukkam, Tiru, Kūḻ, Mādu, Karuvi and Veṟukkai. Although these terms generally mean the same thing, they slightly differ in import. *Poruḷ* comes from the root *poruvu* meaning 'equality' and therefore, that which ensures equality of status in society is *poruḷ; Uḍaimai* is an object worth possessing; *Ākkam* is a thing that converts itself into other things;[48] *Selvam* is derived from *Cel* meaning to move; that is to say, that a man possessing wealth should not lose time to do right things, lest it should move away. The best use of wealth lies in giving it away to the needy.[49] *Perukkam* means that which is apt to multiply or the enhancement of one's reputation; *Tiru* is that which is liked by all;[50] *Kūḻ* means *food; Mādu* literally means 'bullocks or live-stock'. In ancient times when barter economy was in prevalence, bullocks used to be the medium of exchange. Or, in those days bullocks were considered, as it is today, to be wealth. *Karuvi* means an instrument capable of giving whatever is wanted, or it may be considered as a derivative from *Karu* which means the most essential and the indispensable thing for bringing into being the very life on earth. Lastly, *Verukkai* means attraction.[51] Wealth attracts everybody. Thus an etymological study of these words goes to show that the

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45 Tol. Akattiṇai 33.

46 Tirukkuṟaḷ Chapter 76.

47 Tirukkuṟaḷ 89, 170, 179, 381, 400, 411, 594, 631, 751 & 761.

48 Tol. Meyppāḍu 7 (Pērāsiriyam)

49 Puṟam 189.

50 Tirukkōvaiyār 1. (Pērāsiriyar Commentary)

51 Tirukkuṟaḷ 993 (Parimēlaḻagar's Commentary)

ancient Tamils not only did realise the importance of wealth, but they also knew full well the different functional aspects of it. Further, the Tamilian conception of wealth became so enlarged as to include it in its fold not only the outside or the externals of man, but also the inside or the internal qualities of man. According to the Tirukkuṟaḷ even qualities like, self-control, compassion, energy, etc., are considered as wealth.[52] This conception no doubt, from the point of view of the modern economic theory, is the very negation of what Dewett has said: "Wealth does not consist of what a man is, but what he has, something external to himself".[53] But yet, this gives a clear idea as to what place wealth and finance have occupied in the ordinary commerce of the Tamilian life.

The Public Finance : Land Revenue

The Tamil genius has not only thought of the private or the individual finance, but of the public or state finance, also. The Tirukkuṟaḷ lays down to the King as one of his important qualifications, the necessity of his possessing sound knowledge about the State Exchequer. "The King shall know how to find out the sources of revenue of the state, and how to enrich his Exchequer, how to preserve the financial strength and how to expend it worthily".[54] So, Public Finance, the blood vessel of the body-politic, engaged the prime attention of the Tamil rulers. This branch of economy may be profitably studied under two heads, namely the Income and Expenditure. No State can exist or no Government can thrive without finance flowing from the public. How to effect this flow of finance? The general and universal method adopted for this purpose all over the civilised world, from times of yore, is what is known as taxation. Taxation, as it were, was one of the earliest inventions of statesmanship that not only keeps the wheels of the state moving towards the common weal, but also, if properly handled, brings, in its wake, though imperceptibly, a kind of economic equality or adjustment.

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52 Tirukkuṟaḷ Ch. 13, 25 & 60.

53 Modern economic Theory p. 24.

54 Tirukkuṟaḷ 385.

In the pre-Christian era we have no sources to know whether or not the lands were measured and classified for purposes of taxation. In those days, as it still obtains today, the mainstay of the state finance was the land-tax. Though it is very difficult to have an idea about the method of assessment, we can reasonably assume that lands even in the ancient past were measured and classified; for we have references in early literature to *mā* and *vēli,* and *wet* and *dry* lands. In every village there were taxable as well as non-taxable lands. The temples, workers' settlements, tanks, choultry, parks and gardens adjoining the temples, thrashing fields, pastures, river-beds, marshy lands, the uncultivatable waste and the cremation and burial grounds were not taxed.[55]

Several Kinds of Taxes

"The varied material for a study of the revenue resources of the Government during the period under study are found scattered in the hundreds of inscriptions, indigenous literary works and traveller's accounts; but a proper study of the subject is particularly difficult because the terms used in them are in many cases obscure and obsolete"[56]. For example, there are found in the earliest Tamil literary works expressions such as, Iṟai, Tiṟai, Iṟavu, Puravu, Kaḍamai, Kuḍimai, Āyam, Koṇḍi, Uṟuporuḷ and Ulkuporuḷ. Some of these terms have only slight variations in import and hence a careful analysis is essential to differentiate one from the other.

(i) *Iṟai* - It means 'dues' to be paid to Iṟaivaṉ or the King by the people; it is mostly in the form of land-tax.[57]

(ii) *Tiṟai* - It was a considerable amount to be paid to the King by the enemies at regular intervals who were vanquished and kept as his vassals.[58]

(iii) *Iṟavu* - It is also a kind of tax; it was not paid out of any obligation. The King or his men sometimes

55 Tamiḻaka Ātci p. 65 by Dr. M. Rajamanikkanar.

56 South Indian Polity p. 48 by Dr. T.V. Mahalingam.

57 Tirukkuṟaḷ 733.

58 Maduraikkāñchi L. 230.

approached the people for some specific amount which they had to give necessarily irrespective of their capacity, lest they should be put to troubles by the state. It was like the spearman asking the way-farer in a rough and tough manner to shell out his money.[59] Dr. M. Rajamanikkanar presumes that it is a kind of tax begged and got by the King's officials from the people.[60] But, the authority that lurked in that kind of asking, and of the simile that Tiruvaḷḷuvar employed in this connection lead us to presume that *Iṟavu* was a kind of forced money got from the unwilling public.

(iv) *Puravu* - It literally means *'protection'*. In order to protect a certain section of people at times, a special assessment was made. It appears to have been a measure arising out of emergency.[61]

(v) *Kaḍamai* - It means duty; everyone is duty - bound to remit his share of taxes. It was, in other words, a land-tax.[62] Irai and Kadamai were two terms meaning the same thing at different periods of time.

(vi) *Kuḍimai* - It appears to have been a tax levied on properties owned by each family *(Kudi)* like house, house-site, etc. "In ancient and mediaeval times the whole property itself, irrespective of the income from it, was taken into consideration for fixing the tax". Prof. K.A.N. Sastri takes *Kuḍimai* to mean all kinds of taxes due to the state in general.[64]

(vii) *Āyam* - During the time of Tiruvaḷḷuvar, it meant a bet[65] between two parties engaged in playing dice. The winner used to take away the bet (Āyam). In due course it became corrupted in import and meant a professional tax. Kallāyam was a tax levied on the washerman, and it not

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59 Tirukkuṟaḷ 552 (Parimēlaḷagar's Commentary).

60 Tamiḻaka Āṭci p. 69.

61 Puṟam 75. Also Silap. Kāṭchi. ix. 101.

62 Tamiḻaka Āṭci p. 66 by Dr. Rajamanikkanar.

63 South Indian Polity p. 168 by Dr. T.V. Mahalingam.

64 The Chōḻas pp. 522 & 523.

65 Tirukkuṟaḷ 939 (Parimēlaḷagar's Commentary).

only included the tax on his profession, but also the stone which he sued for washing.[66]

(viii) *Koṇḍi* - It referred to the riches got from the enemies specially on the high seas in warfare. It was usually a large slice. To be precise, it was a war levy.

(ix) *U<u>r</u>uporuḷ* - It was not exactly a tax. On the demise of the rich who did not have anybody as their heirs, all the properties both movable and immovable straightway went to the King. The unclaimed and unearthed properties also belonged to him.[67]

(x) *Ulku-porul* - It pertained to the present commercial taxes and customs duties. Duties were imposed on goods that went out of the country and those imported from other countries.[68]

These were the several sources of revenue that went to enrich the Exchequer of the State in ancient times. It will not be out of place here to state that the Tirukku<u>r</u>aḷ forbade the kings from getting riches from certain sources. Taxes on toddy, prostitutes and gambling were condemned.[69] Issuing licenses to toddy-shops, allowing prostitution as an institution, and encouraging gambling simply for filling up the coffers were strongly objected to, and we may be assured that these did not form the basis of taxation. Thus, the Tamilian Economy as visualised in the Tirukku<u>r</u>aḷ was based on ethics and morals as against that of the Arthasastra period. Kautilya in his economic set-up allows both drink and prostitution as additional sources of revenue to the State Exchequer. In the Arthasastra it is said, "Liquor shops shall contain many rooms provided with beds and seats kept apart. The drinking room shall contain scents, garlands of flowers, water and other comfortable things suitable to the varying seasons".[70]

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66 South Indian Polity p. 168 & 169.

67 Tirukku<u>r</u>aḷ 756 (Parimēla<u>l</u>agar's Commentary).

68 Tirukku<u>r</u>aḷ 756 (Parimēla<u>l</u>agar's Commentary).

69 Tirukku<u>r</u>aḷ 920.

70 Kautilya's Arthasasthra Ch. 25 translated by Dr. R. Shama Sastry.

As regards prostitution, it says: "The superintendent of prostitutes shall be employed. The employee shall be a prostitute, whether born or not born of a prostitute's family but noted for her beauty, youth and accomplishments."[71] From what have been quoted above, it is fair to assume that quite a different economy namely a materialistic one, devoid of ethics as against the ethical and egalitarian economy envisaged in the Tirukkuṟaḷ, was in practice in the days of the great Kautilya in his part of the country. This difference between the two conflicting economies is worth remembering.

Taxation Policy

As regards the taxation policy of the early Tamils, we have no authentic records. But at least in theory, some principle pertaining to the burden of taxation appears to have been expected of the kings to follow. A verse in the Puṟanāṉūṟu ways: "Although the extent of the field is less than a *ma,* it would be quite possible for one to feed an elephant everyday, if only the paddy is duly harvested and made into sizeable balls and then given to it. On the other hand, even if the extent of land is more than a *sey* and if the entire paddy crop standing in the field is freely allowed to an elephant to be eaten at its will, the amount of waste caused thereof by being crushed under its feet will be much more than what it would ordinarily eat. In much the same way, if a wise King would collect the taxes in the right way and in the right time, his state would prosper a thousand-fold, and he himself will be praised, but if he being unwise allows his irresponsible officers and silly friends to gather around him, and because of the bad company, levies unreasonable imposts on his subjects and compels them to pay, he, like the elephant that enters the field at its own will, will not benefit, and his state will be reduced to the verge of ruin."[72]

It is generally said that the usual rate of assessment was one-sixth of the gross produce. But scholars are divided

71 Kautilya's Arthasasthra Ch. 27 translated by Dr. R. Shama Sastry.

72 Puṟam - 184

on the question of the exact rate of assessment. Some writers hold that taking one-sixth of the produce as a levy was not in vogue in the ancient Tamil̲akam.[73] So far as the Tamil literature is concerned, we don't get any first-hand evidence in this regard. Parimēlal̲agar, the great commentator of the Tirukkur̲aḷ has pointed out, on two occasions,[74] that one-sixth of the produce or income of a householder went to the state as a levy. But the original couplets in both the places do not warrant his contention. Dr. T.V. Mahalingam observes in this connection: "Though it is not possible to form any clear idea about the prevailing rates of assessment in the Sangam Age, it is interesting to find that the laws of Manu are said to have been followed by the Cola Kings in the eleventh and twelfth centuries"[75] So, Parimēlal̲agar probably expressed his opinion in accordance with the spirit of his time.

The Public Expenditure

Dr. T.V. Mahalingam thinks that the expenditure incurred by the government when compared with the income in ancient times was small.[76] But whatever was expended by the government, we have reason to believe, was directed towards the maximum good of the people. Dalton, the great economist held: "If, therefore, Public Finance is to be treated as a branch of science, economic or political and not merely as a string of catchpenny maxims, one fundamental principle must lie at the root of it. This we may call the principle of maximum social advantage."[77] The Pur̲anān̲ūr̲u speaks of the way as to how the King should spend the public finance. "Oh noble King, thou spendeth thy money in three directions, the virtue, the wealth and the pleasure".[78] The King saw to it that his wealth was spent towards gods, helping the learned and the poor and for achieving fame. Secondly, he spent on maintaining his fourfold defence forces, or winning allies and on splitting the enemies from their friends. Thirdly,

73 Maṇimalar p. 44 (S.K. Govindasamy Pillai).

74 Tirukkur̲aḷ 43 & 756 (Commentary).

75 South Indian Polity p. 162.

76 Ibid. pp. 194 & 195.

77 Public finance p. 9.

78 Pur̲am 28.

money was spent on building mantapas, providing recreational parks and gardens, and on supplying the necessaries of life to the people.[79]

A careful study of the early Tamil works shows that the public money was expended on three main projects namely protection or defence, development and commerce. The protective expenditure was in respect of the army and the police. In a way, the history of the ancient Tamiḻakam was the history of wars between the Kings and the chieftains, and that necessitated the maintenance of a sizeable standing army ready to fight. The fact that Tirukkuṟaḷ speaks of the army and its importance in two chapters elaborately gives an idea of the indispensability of the defence forces for a King, and a cursory reading of the Puṟanāṉūṟu leads one to think that wars were frequently fought for one reason or the other. The Tirukkuṟaḷ says that the army should be specifically looked after by the King and kept above want,[81] and again "The army can triumph over its enemies if only it is not small in numbers, and if it is free from aversion and poverty".[82] There is a clear evidence in the Puṟanāṉūṟu to prove that some sort of a standing army was maintained by the Kings. The armed men of Cōḻā King Neḍuṅkiḷḷi, it is said, were extremely uneasy and had to rub their shoulders amongst themselves so as to lessen their long conserved energy; for he would not march the army onward against the foes due to bad omen caused just then by the flight of some birds in the wrong direction.[83] So, expenditure was incurred for the protection of national borders, and to ward off the imminence of war.

Secondly, expenditure was also incurred on some developmental projects intended to benefit the masses. The great Karikālaṉ whose achievements had been recorded in history, embarked upon the execution of public works like digging irrigation tanks and clearing the forest areas so

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79 Tirukkuṟaḷ 385 (Parimēlaḻagar's commentary).

80 Tirukkuṟaḷ Ch. 77 & 78.

81 Ibid. 382 (Parimēlaḻagar's Commentary).

82 Ibid. 769.

83 Puṟam - 68, 11. 11 to 13.

as to make them fit for human habitation and settlement.[84] In the Puranānūru an indirect and implied reference is made to the fact that the King was bound to conserve rain water which otherwise went to the sea in vain, by constructing suitable dams and digging tanks.[85]

Thirdly, considerable expenditure was incurred on maintaining the staff for supervising the trade and commercial activities in the State. Customs officials were employed by Karikālan who kept a vigilant watch over the imports and exports.[86] Lastly the Kings spent some considerable money on the poets and artists. Instances are numberless and more frequent in the early Tamil literature regarding the royal patronage of the poets and artists. They were in those days acting as liasion officers, and unacknowledged legislators who took an active and genuine interest in the economic life of the nation. So, they were honoured by the State. A beautiful pen-picture in the Porunarārruppaḍai describes the lavishly kind manner in which a family of an artist was received by King Karikālan, and how he personally attended to them and honoured them with presentations and gifts.[87]

Agriculture

By way of concluding the economy of the pre-Buddhist and post-Buddhist Tamilakam, a note on the main occupations of the country may not be out of place. From all accounts, agriculture seems to be the main occupation of the people, and it was, as it is today, a noble and wealth-producing avocation. Cicero once said: "But of all the occupations by which gain is secured, none is better than agriculture, none more profitable, none more delightful, none more becoming to a free man".[88] Cultivation can be said to have ushered in an era of civilisation and culture. The Tolkāppiyam, the earliest extant Tamil Grammar, refers

84 Paṭṭinappālai - 11. 283 & 285.

85 Puram - 18, 11/ 28 to 30.

86 Paṭṭinappālai II. 120 to 137.

87 Porunarārruppaḍai. II. 77 to 129; 152 to 176

88 Foot note in 'The development of economic doctrine' p. 35 by Alexander Gray.

to agriculture and the people engaged in it were called the *Vēḷāḷās*[89]. The Tirukkuṟaḷ, while making a passing reference to other occupations like trade and commerce,[90] speaks in detail about the importance of agriculture, and how cultivation should be scientifically done.[91]

Now, regarding the tenure and proprietorship of the land, we have scant material to arrive at a decision. In the words of Dr. T.V. Mahalingam, "a very important feature of one's right to a particular piece of land is his power to dispose it of."[92] Though such a positive evidence regarding the right of disposal of the land is totally absent, in the early literature, sufficient proof is obtained from the Tirukkuṟaḷ that the ownership or proprietorship of the land rested with the people. The cultivator or the agriculturist is referred to in the Kuṟaḷ as *Kiḷavaṉ* meaning one who is entitled to possess; also it likens the land owned by some one to his own wife whom the husband alone can claim.[93] It was this proprietorship that persisted in through the later centuries, probably much more evidently and clearly as observed by Professor K.A.N. Sastry.[94]

The Society : Caste system

In regard to the ancient Tamil Society, we have numerous references in the Tolkāppiyam, the Tirukkuṟaḷ and the anthologies. The earliest Tamil Society was a well-knit and homogeneous one, altogether untrammelled by caste and communal divisions which stalked the land in the later centuries, though of course, there were occupational divisions among the people. The baneful casteism was totally unknown to the early Tamils. The learned scholar M. Srinivasa Iyengar has observed: "Before the arrival of the Aryans, there was no caste system in the Tamil country. The earliest Brahmin settlers tried, however, to introduce their four-fold division of people, and before they could succeed in it,

89 Tol. Marapu 82.

90 Tirukkuṟaḷ 120.

91 Ibid. Ch. 104.

92 Economic life in the Vijayanagar Empire p. 81.

93 Tirukkuṟaḷ 1039 (with Parimēlaḻagar's commentary).

94 The Chōḻās Vol. II. Part I p. 380

they met with much opposiion"[95] According to Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru, the incoming of the Aryans into India brought in its train certain racial and political problems. The superiority complex assumed by the Aryans separated them from the Dravidians who had a long back-ground of civilisation behind them. It was only out of this racial conflict that the caste system arose.[96]

In the Tolkāppiyam the word *'cāti'* (Jati in Sanskrit) meaning *'caste'* is no doubt found in two places;[97] but it has been used in both the places in respect of the irrational beings to mean a species or a class. The term did not apply to human beings. Tirukkuṟaḷ also says: "All people are alike on the basis of birth."[98] So, all these evidences go to show that in the ancient past, caste was no consideration to the Tamils. But, the Tolkāppiyam and the Tirukkuṟaḷ, however, amply testify to the fact that the Aryan civilisation and culture had already entered Tamiḻakam during the time of these two works. In short, the extant Sangam works clearly indicate the beginning of the long and hard process of the admixture of these two cultures namely the Tamilian and the Aryan.

The Occupational Categories

The people that constitute any civilised society may be broadly grouped under two heads namely, the rulers and the ruled, and this grouping was no exception so far as the ancient Tamil society was concerned. The ruled may generally consist of the nobility, the mercantile community and the agricultural class. The Tolkāppiyam and the Tirukkuṟaḷ speak of the four-fold classification of the people of the ancient Tamil Society. They were the Kings (Arasar), the wise people or the sages (Antaṇar or Aṟivar), the Merchants (Vaṇikar), and the peasantry (Vēḷāḷar). The Tolkāppiyam elaborately specifies the functions and duties of these four categories of people.[99] The Kings protected the people from

95 Tamil Studies p. 61.

96 The Discovery of India p. 68.

97 Tol. Marapu 43 & 64.

98 Tirukkuṟaḷ 972 (Parimēlaḻagar's commentary).

99 Tol. Marapu 71 to 84.

foreign invasion, and ensured them a settled life. The sages or the virtuous people saw to it that the social equilibrium was kept in-tact, and morality untarnished. The merchants or traders contributed to the ever-increasing fund of the national wealth, and last but not least, the farmers produced the food stuffs and raw materials necessary for the different industries. Apart from the King, it was often stressed that only by the concerted efforts, and willing co-operation of the sages, the traders and the farmers can any nation prosper.[100]

Regional Distribution of people

Barring this four-fold classification of the people in the ancient Tamil Society, there was in those days another classification of the populace according to the region to which they belonged, reference to which has already been made in this work. According to this classification, geographical factors or regional factors had been at work. A quite different pattern of life pertaining to the regional distribution of people had been visualised. The whole land was divided into five regions namely the hilly, the pastoral, the coastal, the plain and the sandy regions. The people of these regions were respectively known as the Kuravars, the Āyars, the Paratavars, the U̱lavars and the Ma̱ravars.

The Mountainous Region

In the hilly region (Ku̱riñji) the local chieftain or the leader was called *ve̱rpa̱n.*[101] *Poruppa̱n* and *Cilamba̱n* were also ascribed to him as his other names. The common people were known as *Ku̱ravars* and *Ku̱rathīs.* They were noted for their hunting and were well-versed in the art of archery. The wild animals fell a prey to their bows and arrows. They ate their flesh and covered their nudity with the skin of the animals. "Their knowledge of the medicinal values of the herbs that covered the hill sides enabled them to be their own physicians".[102] A kind of paddy got from the bamboos and millets like *tiṇai* were their food-grains. Teak and sandal

100 Tirukku̱ṛaḷ 731.

101 Akam 18.1.8.

102 Saiva Siddhananta p. 4 by Dr. V. Paranjoti.

wood trees supplied them the necessary fuel for cooking and roasting the flesh. On the occupational side, they were engaged in extracting nectar from the bee-hives, sowing etc. Their recreation was to often bathe themselves in the water-falls.

The Pastoral Region

The chieftain of the pastoral region (mullai) was styled as *Poraiyan̲* or *Poraināḍan̲*[103]. The common people were called *āyar* and *āycciyar* or *īḍaiyar* and *iḍaycciyar.* Cattle-breeding was their chief occupation. They were trading in milk, curds, ghee etc. Different kinds of millets like *varaku* and *mutirai* were the food-grains used by them. Cattle was their wealth. The cows were carefully looked after by them. Riding on the bulls and playing on the flute (Kuḻal) made out of bamboo were their cheif recreational activities.

The Plain

In the plains (marutam) dwelt the agriculturists. Their chieftain was called *ūran̲*[104] or *makiḻnan̲.* The people were known as *uḻavars* and *uḻattiyars.* Cultivation was their chief occupation. Their fields received good irrigation facilities from the rivers and lakes, tanks and wells. Grams and pulses were staple-food for them. Paddy was grown in abundance. They were engaged in cotton-growing and weaving. Usually they were rich.

The Sandy Region

Lastly the chieftain of the sandy region (Pālai) was called *Kāḷai* or *meēḷi.* The people of this place were *maṟavars* or *eyin̲ars.* They led a recklessly irresponsible life. They were brutally anti-social. Their chief occupation was to waylay the travellers and rob them of their valuables and other belongings. The looted articles were sold cheap by them. Cattle-lifting was not uncommon with them. They usually offered prayers to *Korravai,* their goddess, before they set out for stealing or waylaying. They were a ferocious type of people.

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103 Akam 4.1. 13.

104 Ibid 30.1.11.

The Coastal Region

Lastly the cheiftain of the coastal region (Neytal) was called *tuṟaivaṉ*[105] or *sērppaṉ*. The people were known as *paratavars.* "Braced by sea breezes, challenged by the waves, they took to venturesome occupations of sailing, pearl-diving and fishing".[106] They were a seafaring people, confined to the coastal region at first and then boldly sailing into the deep, high and distant seas, Later on, they developed trade with other countries by opening up new sea-routes.

The Different Strata of Society

So far, we have seen the different categories of people who lived in the ancient Tamiḻakam. They were:

1. ARASAR (Kings)
2. ANTAṆAR (Sages or Seers)
3. VAṆIKAR (Traders)
4. VĒḶĀḶAR (Agriculturists)

These people belonged to the higher stratum of society by virtue of their occupation and status. The following were the regional chiefs of the commonality:

1. VEṞPAṈ (Head of the mountainous region)
2. POṞAINĀḌAṈ (Head of the pastoral region)
3. KĀḶAI (Head of the sandy region)
4. ŪRAṈ (Head of the arable region)
5. TUṞAIVAṈ (Head of the coastal region)

and the common folks were:

1. KUṞAVAR (Hunters)
2. ĀYAR (Cowherds)
3. MAṞAVAR (Spearmen)
4. UḺAVAR (Cultivators)
5. PARATAVAR (Fishermen)

Apart from them, the Tolkāppiyam gives another category of men belonging to the ancient society. They were:

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105 Akam 30.1.11.

106 Saiva Siddhananta p. 3 by Dr. V. Paranjoti.

1. AḌIYŌR (Serfs)[107]
2. VIṈAIVALAR (Artisans)[108]
3. EVĀLMARAPIṈAR (Orderlies)[109]

The *'Adiyōr'* were those people who did not have any independent movement or action. They were completely under the grip of their masters. They were almost slaves. The *'viṉaivalar'* were artisans who engaged themselves in some traditional avocations or occupations. The carpenters, the goldsmiths and such other craftsmen came under this category of people. These people were not under anybody's whims and fancies. They were independent. The *'ēvalmarapiṉar'* were those who were not in any way serfs, but served particular bigwigs faithfully.[110]

In the ancient Tamil society there were artists also. They were well-versed in singing, dancing and acting. They may be grouped as follows:[111]

1. KŪTTAR (Silent actors)
2. PĀṆAR (Minstrels or musicians)
3. PORUNAR (Mimics)
4. VIṞALIYAR (Dancing girls)

From the Puṟanāṉūṟu[112] we come to know some other categories of people as under:

1. TUḌIYAṈ (One who beats the drum called *Tudi*)
2. PAṞAIYAṈ (One who beats the drum called *Parai*)
3. KAḌAMBAṈ (One who beats the drum called *Kadambu*)

In addition to these several kinds of people, another group called *pārppaṉar* has also been mentioned in the early works. The Tolkāppiyam speaks of sixfold *pārppaṉar.*[113] This classification of sixfold *pārppaṉar* (later known as Brahmins) arose due to their functions namely, learning,

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107 Tol. Akattiṇai 23.

108 Ibid. " 23.

109 Ibid. " 24.

110 Tol. Akattiṇai 23 & 24 with Dr. S.S. Bharati's Commentary pp. 78 to 85.

111 Ibid. Puṟattiṇai 10.

112 Puṟam 335.

113 Tol. Puṟattiṇai 16. (Iḷambūraṉar's Commentary).

teaching, performing sacrifices, causing others to sacrifice, giving and taking. The Akanāṉūṟu mentions another kind of pārppaṉar called the *vēḷappārppār*.[114] These people were not used to performing sacrificial rites, but they took to sawing and chisteling the conches and shells. Such was the society we are able to envisage in the early literary works of the Tamils.

Religion: The worship

In the words of R.H.Tawney, "There is a moral and religious, as well as a material environment which sets its stamp on the individual, even when he is least conscious of it."[115] Ever since mankind began to think, it may be said without any fear of contradiction, there had been a strong but imperceptible interaction between society and religion, and almost all people were more or less affected directly or indirectly by the irresistible religious currents and cross-currents. Before we attempt a critical probe into the literary works of the ancient Tamils regarding the nature and form of religion, a word about the origin and development of the worship of gods will not be out of place.

At the dawn of the religious instinct in the minds of the ancients, we may safely declare that there were no dwelling places like temples etc., for the gods, for, there was no conception of God Himself as a separate super-being apart from the objects and forces of Nature. According to some learned researchers, man first worshipped trees as gods themselves, and only afterwards, the tree was considered to be the dwelling place of gods and spirits. [116] The first man on earth also had the tree as his abode. "So man gave his first house to his god as well. To begin with, no object was placed under the tree to represent the deity, for the tree itself was regarded as a huge natural temple in which the spirit dwelt in suffusion. Later on, as time advanced, it was thought necessary to keep some images under the tree to evoke the reverence of all strangers and passers-by."[117] The temples, therefore, were the latest

114 Akam 24.

115 Religion and the Rise of capitalism p. 26.

116 Tree worship and Ophiolatry p. 5 by Prof. G. Subramania Pillai.

117 Ibid.

development in the process of worship and deification. Numerous and frequent references are made in the Tamil literature to God being seated under some tree[118] or residing in it".[119]

The Regional Deities

"As social life expands, its values become more varied and the representations of the gods gain correspondingly in content. A god takes on new qualities and aspects in response to the needs and desires of his worshippers and this process appears in all religions."[120] This statement is no exception to the Tamil genius also. The Tolkāppiyam[121] speaks of Māyōn̲, Cēyōn̲, Vēndan̲ and Varuṇan̲, along with Kor̲r̲avai.[122] Of these gods and goddesses, Māyōn̲ later became Māl, Cēyōn̲ became Sivan̲ (Siva),[123] and Kor̲r̲avai became *Turgai. Dr.* M. Rajamanikkam holds that Sivan̲, Tirumāl (Māl), Kor̲r̲avai, and Murugan̲ all these four are Dravidian deities;[124] but he maintains that the term *Kadavuḷ*[125] does not mean Sivan̲.[126] The late lamented Prof. K. Subramania Pillai consideres that Sivan is a derivative from the qualitative term *semmai*[127] and accordingly it is a Tamil word. But it is certain that the term *Sivan̲* did not find a place in the Tolkāppiyam.

Religious festivals

All these references cited above clearly prove that the ancient Tamils believed in the existence of a Supreme Being, and also they celebrated festivals in honour of the gods. Other festivals like the festival of lights[128] (Kārthigai

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118 'Ālamar Celvan̲ Aṇisāl Makan Vil̲a' - Kalittogai 83.

119 'Ton̲r̲ur̲ai Kaḍavuḷ cērnta parārai' - Nar̲r̲inai 303.

120 Encyclopaedia Brittanica.

121 Tol. Akattiṇai 5

122 Ibid. Pur̲attiṇai 4

123 Tamil̲ar Matam, p. 122 by Maraimalai Adigal.

124 Tamil̲aka Varalār̲u, p. 48.

125 Tol. Pur̲attiṇai 27.

126 Saiva Samayam p. 22 by Dr. M. Rajamanikkam.

127 Tamil̲ar Samayam p. 80.

128 Akanān̲ūr̲u 141.

Vila), in the Tamil month of Kārthigai, the festival of bathing (Tāinneerādal) in the month of Tai, Ātirai festival[130] in the month of Mārgali, etc., were celebrated by the Tamils. All these festivals had some religious significance.[131] The connotation of the terms *Kadavul* and *Iyavul* both denoting God, is note-worthy. *Kadavul* is one who transcends all human conception, and is limitless, while *Iyavul* means that which moves everything.[132] These terms also suggest that God has neither form nor name; but man, in his avidity for establishing personal relationship, has given various names and forms.[133] This state of affairs regarding God had been apparently in vogue even in the ancient past as could be seen from the innumerable references in the early Tamil works.

Prayers

In the olden days prayers also were offered to gods for the Common good of the people whenever there were natural calamities like floods, earthquakes, drought and cyclone. In one of the verses in the Puranānūru,[134] the hill-folk or the Kuravar prayed to their regional god that he should bless them with plenty of rains, when they were threatened with drought and protect them with no rains, when they were likely to be washed away by heavy floods. Tiruvalluvar, also asks, :Of what avail is learning, if the learned do not worship the feet of Him who is wisdom-incarnate?"[135]

In the Paripādal, one of the Sangam anthologies, a prayer is offered to Lord Muruga:[135A] "Oh Muruga, when Indra, broke his promise and assaulted you with his famous *Vajrāyuthā*, you remained as one, though you split into six

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129 Paripādal, II. 1. 91.

130 Ibid. II. 77 & 88.

131 Saiva Samaya Valarchi. pp. 27 & 28 by Dr. M. Rajamanikkam.

132 The Golden Jubilee Number 1956 pp. 336 to 338 published by the Madurai Tamil Sangam.

133 Tiruvāsagam, Tellenam 1.

134 Puram 143.

135 Tirukkural 2.

135A Paripādal 5. II. 48 to 79.

parts temporarily. In your childhood, when you playfully enjoyed yourself in a dual with Indra, with no weapons whatsoever in your hands, you vanquished him. As a result of this valour on your part, Agni, the fire-god presented to you a cock and made you the general of his army. Indra and Yama, the god of death presented you with a peacock and a he-goat respectively. Thus, being possessed of the goat, peacock, cock, bow, tree, garland, diamond, sword, spear, pick-axe, axe and fire in all your twelve divine hands, you became the commander-in-chief of the army composed of the Devas. Oh! Lord! with the beautiful Kadamba garland, we offer our prayers to you. Those who entertain evil thoughts and harm the other beings, and those who are devoid of virtues and deny the theory of the cycle of births will never reach your kingdom. On the other hand, those who accept your existence and follow the virtuous path will reach your kingdom. Therefore Lord, we ask Thee in Thy name, not earthly pleasure and impermanent things like wealth etc., but we humbly and reverently implore you to let us have your grace which ultimately frees us from births, the love that we have to show to you and the virtue. Let us be blessed with these three things."

Apart from such well-meaning positive prayers at the altar of God, there is no literary evidence in the ancient times to show that the people prayed to Him for their selfish ends leading sometimes even to the detriment of others' health and wealth. Such ignominious practices and anti-social thoughts seem to have begun to loom large in some countries. In this connection it may not be out of place to quote Epicurus who said: "If God listens to the prayers of men, all men would quickly have perished; for they are for ever praying for evil against one another".[136]

Vaishnavism

So far we have seen the various religious ideas referred to in the ancient Tamil literary works. Now, it will be useful to systematize those ideas under two heads namely Vaishnavism (Mālneṟi) and Saivism (Sivaneṟi) which are the

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136 Man and Man: The Social Philosphers p. 247 Edited by Sax Commins & Robert N. Linscott.

most ancient religious systems known to the Tamils. In the Tolkāppiyam, as we have already seem, *māl* is referred to as mayon who belongs to the pastoral region.[137] He is the first deity ever mentioned by Tolkāppiyar in his famous work. The Akanāṉūṟu in one of the verses, speaks of these divine plays: "When some shepherdesses or girls of the pastoral region were bathing in the Jamuna leaving their clothes on its banks, Māl or Kaṇṇaṉ took away those clothes, and placed them on the branches of a Kurunta tree. At that time, Balarāmaṉ, his eldest brother, came that way. On seeing him, those girls wanted to cover up their nakedness. Out of compassion, Māl lowered the branches of the tree, so that they could easily take back their clothes and dress themselves up."[138] In another verse Raman is mentioned: "En route to Ilaṅka (Ceylon) Rāmā, along with his people sat under a huge banyan tree on the banks of the Tiruvāṇai in the Pāṇḏya Country and ordered the birds residing in it not to make noise as he was immersed in the Vedas".[139]

The Tirukkuṟaḷ,[140] the Puṟanāṉūṟu,[141] the Patiṟṟu pattu,[142] the Kalittogai,[143] the Pattuppāṭṭu[144] and the Paripāḍal,[145] all these Sangam works properly refer to the several aspects of this sect by describing the various qualities of Māl and his avatar Rāmā etc. In the light of what has been said above, it is crystal clear that "even before the days of Tolkāppiyar, Vaishnavism as a religious sect had spread in Tamil Nad and that there were temples for Tirumāl".[146]

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137 Tol. Akattiṇai 5; Puṟattiṇai 5.

138 Akam. 59.

139 Ibid. 70.

140 Tirukkuṟaḷ. 610 & 1103.

141 Puṟam. 56, 57, 174 & 378.

142 Patiṟṟupattu. 31 11. 7 to 9 & Patikam VII 1.8.

143 Kalittogai, 103, 11, 53 to 55; 104 11.9 & 10; 105 1.9.

144 Pattuppāṭṭu, Perumpāṇ. 1.373, 391; Maduraikkāñchi 1.511.

145 Paripāḍal 1, 2, 3, 4. 13 & 15.

146 'Vaiṇavam' by B.R. Purushotama Naidu, Madurai Tamil Sangam Golden Jubilee Number 1956, p. 289 & 290.

Saivism

We have already seen that in the Tolkāppiyam reference has been made to Sēyō<u>n</u>, Māyō<u>n</u>, Varuṇa<u>n</u> and Indra, but no mention has been made to *Siva<u>n</u>* in that work. That does not mean that there was no Saivism or Sivane<u>r</u>i in those days. The Tolkāppiyam, however, refers to *Kaḍavuḷ,*[147] which means one who is above everything and all-pervading. This Supreme Power is the motive force of all the five elements. Unlike the other regional deities, *Kaḍavuḷ* or Siva has no birth. Prof. Avvai S. Doraisamy Pillai holds that the term *Kaḍavuḷ* would refer only to the Lord Siva, since all the attributes and qualities ascribed to *Kaḍavuḷ* are also said about Siva,[148] and he concludes that Siva is a common god for all the regions, and in every Saivite Temple, Lord Siva occupies the middle position, the two sides being occupied by the other four deities technically called *Parivāra Dēvadhaigaḷ* or the subsidiary gods.[149] Thus though the term 'Siva<u>n</u>' has not actually occurred anywhere in any of the Sangam anthologies, He haws been described by other appropriate and adequate phrases and epithets. The Silappatikāram speaks of Siva as one who is birthless and formless.[150] The Pu<u>r</u>anā<u>n</u>ū<u>r</u>u refers to Him as one who has a beautiful blue throat.[151] The Maṇimēkalai speaks of Him as One who is seated under the Banyan tree.[152] Apart from these references, the people were named after Siva. Names like I<u>r</u>aiya<u>n</u>ār, Uruttira<u>n</u>, Peruntēva<u>n</u>ār, Pēreyil-Muruvalar, Veṇpūti all refer to one or the other quality or attribute of Siva. Dr. M. Rajamanikkam holds that Peruntēva<u>n</u> refers to *Mahadēv.* Pēreyil-Muruvalar is one who destroyed the tree ramparts by his laughter, and Veṇpūti refers to one who wears the sacred white ash.[153]

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147 Tol. Poruḷ. 85.

148 The Madurai Tamiḻ Sangam Golden Jubilee Number p. 339.

149 Ibid. " p. 343.

150 Silap. V.: 169.

151 Pu<u>r</u>am. 91.

152 Maṇimēkalai. III: 144.

153 Saiva Samaya Vaḷarchi p. 29.

Jainism and Buddhism

These two religions are not indigenous to Tamil land. They came from North India. Scholars opine that Jainism began to spread in the South during the reign of Chandra Gupta Maurya, and Buddhism during the period of Asoka.[154] These two systems were opposed to the Vedic cult. They did not approve of the caste system and decried the Vedas and Yagas. They emphasised the importance of virtue or right thought, right speech and right action. The Tolkāppiyam is conspiciously silent about these two religious systems. In the Tirukkuṟaḷ too, no direct and unambiguous references are made to these religions. The Eight Collections or the Anthologies do not give us any clue as to the prevalence of Buddhism and Jainism. But by the mere fact that no references are to be found in these ancient Tamil works, we cannot conclude that these two religions did not spread in Tamil Nadu in the early centuries before and after Christ. Some of the poems in the anthologies were sung by poets who had embraced Buddhism. For instance, one Ilambhōdhiyār whose poem is found in Naṟṟiṇai,[155] was a Buddhist, for , the suffix in his name *bōdhi* means the pipal tree under which the great Buddha acquired enlightenment.

Further, in the Silappathikāram adequate mention has been made of these two systems. The Buddha is referred to here[156] as seated under the bodhi tree which has green foliage and five branches and the Agama or the Scripture which he gave to the world was read and explained by the heavenly preceptors. Reference is also made to a Jain temple (Arukkatāṉam).[157] The Jains do not eat meat. They never utter falsehood. Jealousy and covetousness are considered by them as grave crimes. They are of two categories namely those who live with their families and those who have renounced the worldly pleasures. They go to their temple and preach the tenets of Jainism. In the Maduraikkāñchi,[158]

154 Ibid. Pp. 30 & 31.

155 Naṟṟiṇai 72.

156 Silap. II. 11 to 1.

157 Ibid. II. 15 to 25.

158 Maduraikkāñchi II. 475 to 488.

one of the ten Tamil Idylls, mention has been made to a Jain temple with flower and incense being offered in worship. They grew flower plants around their abode. So, in the light of what has been given above, Buddhism and Jainism were in vogue in Tamil Nadu even before the early centuries of the Christian era,[159] at any rate before the period of the epic of our study, namely the Maṇimēkalai.

Religious Tolerance

Though in the ancient Tamil country several religions like Saivism, Vaishnavism, Jainism and Buddhism were practised by the people, religious discord and disharmony were almost absent. But however, there was some conflict between the Vedic religions and the non-Vedic religions. As between Saivism and Vaishnavism and other allied cults there was complete harmony. In one of the stanzas in the Pu<u>r</u>anā<u>n</u>ū<u>r</u>u, the poet Nakkīrar has praised a Pāṇḍya king in comparison with Tirumāl, Siva, Muruga and Balarama. "Oh, King! you are Lord Siva Himself in wrath; in strength you are Balarama; in killing enemies you are Tirumal; and in getting things done according to your will you are Muruga."[160] Here the poet has not made any difference between the several gods. Bhāratam Pāḍiya Perundēva<u>n</u>ār has sung in praise of Lord Siva in the Akanā<u>n</u>ū<u>r</u>u, the Pu<u>r</u>anā<u>n</u>ū<u>r</u>u and the Aiṅgu<u>r</u>u<u>n</u>ū<u>r</u>u, and implores Muruga and Tirumāl in the Ku<u>r</u>untogai and the Na<u>rr</u>iṇai respectively. Thus Dr. M. Raja Manikkam rightly concludes that there was absolute harmony and concord between Saivism and Vaishnavism.[161]

But there was in those days, a sharp conflict between Buddhism and the Vedic religion. Āvūr Mūlaṅgi<u>l</u>ār has praised the qualities of one Viṇṇantāya<u>n</u> in the following terms: "Oh, my lord, you have hailed from a family of Vedic culture. Your ancestors have successfully laboured to put down false propagation of the Buddhist tenets."[162] This note of religious intolerance slowly gained ground with the result that even Jainism and Buddhism, both the anti-Vedic religions came into conflict later on, which will be described in detail in the following chapter.

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159 Buddhism and Tamil pp. 19 & 20 By Mylai. Seeni Venkatasamy.

160 Pu<u>r</u>am 56.

161 Saiva Samaya Vaḷarchi p. 21.

162 Pu<u>r</u>am 166 with Old Commentary.

Chapter III

RELIGION AND PHILOSOPHY IN THE MANIMEKALAI

SECTION A : RELIGION

It will be useful as well as convenient for us to deal with the religious and philosophical systems as envisaged in the Maṇimēkalai under two heads. Firstly, we have to refer to the various religious sects and practices prevalent during the time of this romantic epic. Secondly, a close and detailed study of the hard core of the different philosophical systems as expounded in chapters XXVII, XXIX and XXX will have to be taken up. Here we shall attempt a critical analysis of the several religious habits and practices that obtained in those days.

Indra

Several references in regard to the spread and co-existence of the different religious codes and practices are found in the Maṇimēkalai. Indra, the god of rains, was praised in all glory. In his honour, a grand festival called the Indra festival was celebrated for the first time in the city of Kāvirippūmpaṭṭiṉam, the capital of the Cōḻās during the days of Tūṅgu Eyil Eṟinta Toḍittoḷ Sembiyaṉ. On the eve of this national festival, it is said, several religious teachers of the day who were well versed in their respective philosophies and scriptures gathered together at the village common and gave discourses.[1] Temples for several other gods were there. Indra had a temple at Kāvirippūmpaṭṭiṉam named after his famous and invincible weapon called the

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1 Maṇi I. 1 to 13 and 60 to 61.

Vajrāyutha, and it was popularly known as the *Vajrakkōṭṭam.*[2] It was the temple where there was a drum, the beating of which announced the festive occasions to the people.

Siva and Muruga

Lord Siva has been described as the god who has an eye on his fore-head.[3] Muruga, the god of beauty, is very often mentioned by the author in this epic. He is said to be the son of Lord Siva who is seated under the banyan tree.[4] While the author described the several scenes that Maṇimēkalai, the heroine of this epic, saw along with Sutamathy, her companion, on her way to the flower garden on the outskirts of the city of Puhār, he takes pleasure in giving a picturesque and vivid description of Muruga:[5] A few ladies adorned a child with diamonds tied by golden strings on his head. They applied white mustard on the child's head, so that they believed that evil forces like devils and ghosts might not haunt him. The crescent-like forehead of the child was brightened, and round his neck, a chain consisting of five parts made in the shape of the five weapons of Tirumāl namely the conch, the wheel, the staff, the sword and the bow, was beautifully swung. Then he was finely dressed and placed on the back of an elephant. The ladies, standing by the side of the elephant, exhorted the passers-by to have a look or darshan of the child who verily looked like Muruga. Muruga is also said to be wearing the garland strewn with Kadamba flowers that are usually found in the rainy season.[6] He is referred to as one who has subdued the Kravuñja Mountain, this allusion being a suggestion of his supreme valour coupled with his superb beauty.[7]

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2 Maṇi I. 27; V. 114.

3 I. 54.

4 III. 144.

5 III. 132 to 145.

6 IV. 49.

7 V. 13 & 14.

Goddess of Learning and Durga

There was a temple for Goddess Durga. She is referred to in this epic by the name *Kādamar Celvi*[8] which means that she lives in the jungle like Diana of the Greek Mythology. Usually the temple of Durga or Korravai of the ancient Tamil society was situated in the jungles. All around her temple, skulls and heads of the dead were found scattered. There was an altar before her where sacrifices were offered. The author makes a mention about *Chintā Dēvi.* There was a temple in her name,[9] and she was the goddess of all learning and art. Such a temple was not to be found in the days of Tolkāppiyar and a few centuries that followed him. Several other characteristics of her are also mentioned. *Chintā Dēvi* also connotes that she is the goddess of mind or all thinking; she is also the goddess of speech; so she is said to be living in the tongue of every human being.[10] It was this goddess of learning that blessed *Āputtiraṉ* with the divine bowl which Maṇimēkalai later got from the Kōmugi tank.[12] Also a passing reference by way of metaphor has been made by the author about the existence of *Tarunilaikkottam*[13] or the temple of the *Kaṟpaga tree.*

Some Minor Deities

The epic also reveals that there was a temple at Vañji, the capital of the Cērās dedicated to Kaṇṇagi,[14] the heroine of the Silappatikāram. Maṇimēkalai during her sojourn went to Vañji and worshipped Kaṇṉagi, who was in the form of an idol consecrated by the great Cera king Seṅguṭṭuvaṉ. The author refers to two other deities who had also temples. At Kāvirippūmpaṭṭiṉam, there was one *Sakkaravāḷakkōṭṭam* or the abode of the sages. Inside it, was what known as the *Ulaga Aṟavi* or a common place where the destitutes, the disabled and the sick usually,

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8 VI. 50 to 53 & XXIII. 115

9 XIII. 106

10 XIV. 17 & 18

11 Ibid. 16

12 XI. 56 to 58

13 V. 114

14 XXVI. 2 to 5

assembled and waited for their doles.[15] Right in that *Aṟavi* there was the Sambāpati temple.[16] Sambapati was considered to be the protector of the people of that city from time immemorial. Maṇimēkalai, the heroine, is said to have gone there and worshipped the deity.[17] A reference is also found to *Kantiṟpāvai* or a statue carved in pillar at the *Aṟavi.* This deity is said to have possessed the power of revealing the past births of the human beings who went and stood before it.[18]

Tirumāl

References are there in this epic in regard to Tirumal. He is said to be in possession of a golden wheel (chakra) in one of his right hands.[19] The author is delighted to refer to one of the avatars of Tirumāl, namely the Vāmaṉā (dwarf) Avatar.[20] Māvaṅkiḷḷi, the king of the Cōḻa country, is said to be the descendant of the great Māvali whom Neḍiyōṉ or Tirumāl once put to shame. Tirumāl, the story goes, came down on earth as a dwarf to king Māvali, who was haughty and highly egoistic. Just to teach him a lesson, Tirumāl begged him for land which could be covered by three of His steps. When Māvali agreed to it, Tirumāl suddenly assumed incredible proportions in size with the result Māvali's whole kingdom was covered by two steps and for the third step, He placed his leg on his head and thus put down his pride. This allusion is noteworthy in that the author shows as much intimacy with the stories of Hindu Pantheon as with those of the Buddha. In this connection, Dr. B.C. Law has observed: "No incident of Buddhist history is described in any work of Buddhist history without reference to some tale or other dealing with the anterior births of the Buddha or some other saint of the Buddhist hierarchy." The introduction of the miraculous is, therefore, of the essential equipment even of Buddhist history. There is another

15 XVII. 78 to 81.

16 XVII. 88.

17 Ibid. 90; XVIII. 144 & 145.

18 XVII 89; XV. 33.

19 XIII. 57 & 58.

20 XIX. 51 to 53.

reference too. In the garden park at Kāvirippūmpaṭṭiṉam where Kiḷḷi and his queen Sīrthi used to spend their evenings, there was a beautiful tank full of water where there was a lovely swan. A peacock and a pea-hen went to the swan and all the three began sportfully circling the tank. This beautiful sight is likened by the author to what is called *Kuravai*[21], a kind of play in which Kaṇṇaṉ (Maṇivaṇṇaṉ), his wife Nappiṉṉai and his brother Balarāmaṉ are made to participate. Although this comparison of Kaṇṇaṉ etc. is not very necessary here, yet the author takes pleasure in mentioning the divine play of Kaṇṇaṉ. This shows his interest in other religions. Thus far, we have seen the various references made in the epic regarding the Vedic religions.

The Buddha

It goes without saying that the Maṇimēkalai is primarily and pre-eminently a Buddhist epic eulogising the manifold qualities of the Buddha. The epic mentions the existence of the Buddhist temple at Kāvirippūmpaṭṭiṉam. The Buddha is referred to as one who expounded the noble fourfold truth and the possessor of the supreme wisdom.[22] The author, being a Buddhist himself, indulges in a beautiful laudation of the Buddha through the goddess, Maṇimēkalai: "He is the One who possesses true wisdom; He is purity incarnate; He is one of good deeds; He is the ancient One, One who has enriched himself with worldly experiences, and One who has conquered the three evils of desire (Kāmam), wrath (Vekuḷi) and confusion (Mayakkam). He is also said to be one who is all-knowing, One who has conquered Mārā and One who is the guardian of all. He is also described as One who has destroyed all his enemies. In short, one must have a thousand tongues to adequately praise the myriad qualities of the Buddha."[23]

Moreover, He is the Supreme Being who is possessed of the Wheel of Dharma.[24] He is the greatest penitent on earth possessing true knowledge.[25] He is a medical luminary

21 XIX. 61 to 66.
22 XX. 5.
23 V. 98 to 105.
24 VI. 11.
25 X. 84; XXI. 48.

who gives His patients effective prescriptions to stop for ever the ever-flowing chain of births in the world.[26] He received enlightenment under the Bodhi tree and he is the Lord of Dharma.[27]

The Buddha-seat

On the outskirts of the city of Kāvirippūmpaṭṭiṉam, there was a flower garden to which Maṇimēkalai along with her companion Sūṭamati went to gather flowers for worshipping the Buddha. In that garden there was a pavilion made of crystal having a Lotus Seat with the foot-prints of the Buddha. This was erected by the divine architect Mayaṉ with great care and skill. "If anybody placed buds at the altar, they would flower, and those flowers would never fade. The bees would not go and stay at the flowers. If some one offers flowers at this peculiarly divine Seat with any god in his mind, the flowers would automatically reach that particular god. If, on the other hand, flowers were offered without thinking of any of the gods, they would remain at the Seat. This divine Seat was so made as to illustrate that those who do not put their heart and soul in any undertaking of theirs, will not derive any benefit thereof and those who do things with a purpose and resolution of mind would reap the fruit".[28]

Prayer to the Buddha

Prayers are addressed to the Buddha by Maṇimēkalai, the heroine and the goddess Maṇimēkalai. The Buddhists seem to have believed in the efficacy of prayers. 'More things are wrought by prayer than this world dreams' of[29] - Tennyson has said so. Maṇimēkalai in one of her prayers praises the Buddha in the following terms of unbounded admiration:

"I bow to thy feet, for, Thou art
the conqueror of Cupid!

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26 IX. 61.

27 XI. 30 & 42; XII. 111.

28 III. 64 to 79.

29 Tennyson: Morte d' Arthur.

I bow to thy feet, for, Thou art
the destroyer of all Evil!
I bow to thy feet, for, Thou art
the seeker of others' Good;
I bow to thy feet, for, Thou art
the refuser of Paradise;
I bow to thy feet, for, Thou art
transcend all Thoughts;
I bow to thy feet, for, Thou
brighten all others' Eyes;
I bow to thy feet, for, Thou
close thy ears to Evil speech
I bow to thy feet, for, Thou
truthful with Eloquence;
I bow to thy feet, for, Thou
the destroyer of the sorrows of the
Hell-Dwellers.
I bow to thy feet, for, Thou
the destroyer of the sorrows of the
Nagas;
Oh, glorious One; my tongue can
seldom adequately praise Thee;
I bow to Thee in complete silence
and reverence."[30]

The above prayer vividly and picturesquely depicts the Buddha in all glory.

The Religious Temperament

In the foregoing chapter it was pointed out that there arose some mild conflict between the Vedic religions and the non-vedic or anti-vedic religions. In so far as this epic is concerned, we see, the author has made elaborate and profuse references to all the religions that obtained in his time. But he has his mental reservations regarding certain religions. Though he does not inflict a direct and open affront on the Vedic religions, still he, in a subtle way, attacks it. When Āputtiraṉ, the cow-boy, saw a cow in a Brahmin's house ready to be sacrificed, he made up his

30 XI. 61 to 72.

mind to steal the cow, so that it might be saved from being killed by the Brahmin during his sacrificial rites. He actually stole the cow away and went his way. When Āputtiran̲ was caught hold of by the Brahmins, he told them in their very faces that he totally disapproved of the barbarous habit of sacrificing the cow, which feeds the whole mankind all the world over from the very birth onwards. This reference undoubtedly has been made by the author through Āputtiran̲ to indicate his religious conviction as against those of the Brahminical priesthood.[31]

The author of this epic is very much adversely critical of the Jains' code of conduct. He takes delight in giving a caricature of a Jain ascetic. "He used to live in a Jain monastery. He was having a bamboo staff in one of his hands and a bowl hanging on his shoulders. He was completely naked shunning all honour befitting any sane human being. He troubled himself in a meaningless manner even for the unseen living organisms. He was often addicted to fasting, and did not bathe himself for days together like an elephant lest, he thought, the unseen living beings on his body should die as a result of his bathing".[32] In another place in this epic, when the Buddha-Seat erected by the divine architect Mayan̲ is referred to, the author makes rather a pungent and cryptic remark about Jainism. He dubs the Jain teachers, as unreasonably naughty ascetics for, they held that whatever is done even unconsciously or without fore-thought is sure to bear fruit as opposed to the firm conviction of the Buddhist that if anything is done without preoccupation, it will never bear fruit.[33] These remarks found in the Maṇimēkalai against Jainism go to show that, during the time of this epic, there had already arisen a sharp difference of opinion, amounting to mutual recrimination in matters religious, between Jainism and Buddhism, both of which shot up as rivals of the Vedic religions. This indeed is a paradox.

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31 XIII. 50 to 59.

32 III. 86 to 91.

33 III. 74 to 77.

The Buddhist beliefs and Doctrines

In the Buddhist Theology there occurs a phrase *Ētu-nikaḻcchi*[34] or the law of causation. In Sanskrit it is known as *Hetu-Prabhavam* which means, 'the showing up of the cause'. It is a definite stage in the religious life of the Buddhist disciple. According to this theory, time would come when the past actions would bring forth their consequences. The statement of Mādhavi to Vasantamālai, he companion regarding the pathetic death of Kōvalan͟, was the motive force for the decision of renouncing the worldly life on the part of her daughter Maṇimēkalai. That is to say that the proper time had come for Manimekalai to reap the fruits of her good deeds in the past birth. This law of cause and effect that operated in the life of Maṇimēkalai is compared to a fine flower which, when only proper time comes, smells sweet. It was their strong belief that those who stood before the Buddha Seat, would get to know the history of their past birth.[35] The Buddhist theology emphasises the indispensability of the human body which alone ultimately paves the way for attaining the everlasting bliss.[36] The beauty and youthfulness found in the human body are apt to fade and ultimately the body itself decays. Realising this temporariness of the human embellishments, people should strive to do good things while they are in the prime of their youth. Maṇimēkalai, in the disguise of Kāyasaṇḍigai spoke to Uthayakumāran͟, the prince-lover of Maṇimēkalai in the most disparaging manner about the human body however well adorned with jewels, dress, flesh and the like.[37]

The Buddhists believed in re-birth and stressed the importance of the virtuous path.[38] Those who are born will necessarily die; and the dead will have re-birth; virtue begets pleasure, and evil begets pain.[39] To the Buddhist,

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34 Ibid. 1 to 4; 19 & 20.
35 IX. 5 to 8; X. 75.
36 XI. 138 to 139.
37 XX. 40 to 69.
38 XXI. 105.
39 XXI. 19 to 20; 113 to 114.

certain things and practices are strictly forbidden.[40] They are drink, untruth, theft, murder and passion. Worst of all these things is passion. Whoever does not control passion will surely fall a prey to the other four also. It is the most difficult one to get rid of. Those that do not condemn and conquer these five evils, will suffer untold hardships in Hell.

Aravana Adigal, the Buddhist saviour, in one of his sermons to the queen, Madhavi and her companion Sutamati, began to explain the true nature of the human existence. According to him, one should try to understand the twelve *nidanas* or the conditions of existence, so that he may get real happiness. The twelve *nidanas* are (1) ignorance, (2) action, (3) consciousness, (4) name and form, (5) mind and the five sense-organs, (6) sensuous feelings, (7) experiencing the good and the bad, (8) thirst, (9) attachment, (10) existence, (11) birth, (12) consequences of karma (action). So far, the religious aspects of the epic have been discussed.

SECTION B : PHILOSOPHY

The Heretical Systems

Maṇimēkalai, the heroine, taking on the form of a holy man entered the city of Vañji, the capital of the Cērā Kings. It was, among other splendours and glories, singularly noted for the wise, learned and saintly men of different religious sects. Since the time was ripe for Maṇimēkalai to learn the truths and tenets of different religious creeds, she approached several sectaries and votaries of different faiths one by one who, in their turn, expounded their respective doctrines or articles of faith. Sāttaṉār, the author of this romantic epic, very vividly and beautifully pictures this part of the heroine's mission in chapter XXVII.

I. Pramāṇa Vādā

At the outset Maṇimēkalai met the exponent of the Pramāṇa Vādā of the Vaidika system and asked him to let her known the ultimate truth of his creed as he understood it. Expatiating on the instruments of knowledge or cognition,

40 XXII. 169 to 176; XXIII. 91 to 141.

he quoted three great authorities namely the famous Vēdaviyāsā, Krtakōṭi and the flawless Jaimini who had formulated the instruments of knowledge or the pramāṇās to be ten, eight and six respectively.1 They are[2],

1.	Direct perception	(Kāṭchi or Pratyaksha)
2.	Inference	(Karutal or Anumāna̲)
3.	Similitude	(Uvamam or Upamā)
4.	Authority	(Urai or Agama)
5.	Assumption	(Arthāppatti)
6.	Appropriateness	(Iyalpu or Svabhāva)
7.	Tradition	(Aitīhya)
8.	Negation	(In̲mai or Abhava)
9.	Inference by elimination or correlation	(Mīṭchi or Olipu or Pārisēsha)
10.	Occurrence	(Uḷḷaner̲i or Sambhava)

Before entering into the details of each one of these ten means of knowledge, an analytical and critical note on them as a whole is necessary. The author, while enumerating the ten instruments, does not expatiate on them consecutively, but he pauses, after mentioning the first four (Kāṇḍal to Āgama) to insert an adjunct "āndaya" meaning "along with those". This is just to show that the first four instruments above mentioned are more important and therefore a class by themselves, that the other six.[3] Sivagñāna̲ Siddhiyār, a later Saiva canonical work, also speaks about these ten instruments of cognition and indicates that there are more of such instruments which, however, are ultimately grouped under the three main instruments namely Kāṇḍal, Karutal and Urai (direct perception, inference and authority).[4]

Of the ten means or cognition mentioned above *Kāṇḍal* or *Kāṭchi* (perception) is of five kinds, because there

1 Maṇi. XXVIII. 5 to 8.

2 Ibid. 9 to 12.

3 Maṇimēkalai p. 408 (South India Saiva Siddhanta Publication with Avvai S. Doraisamy Pillai's Commentary for the last 4 chapters).

4 Siddhiyār Supakkam, Aḷavai : Stanza 1.

are five sense organs in the physical constitution and these five organs namely the eyes, the ears, the nose, the tongue and the body give us five different sensations or sense experiences. The eyes experience the colour of the object; the ears hear the sound; the nose smells; the tongue enjoys the taste, and the body feels the touch. By this five-fold perception of the sense organs, pleasure or pain is experienced.[5] When the life, (Uyir or Prana), the sense organs and the mind, in relation to the light shed by the sun, the moon and the fire, operate in a concerted manner, without let or hindrance, a complete understanding or true perception without exclusion (Suttal), error (Tirital) and doubt (Kavaṟkōḍal) of the object (Poruḷ) in all its semblances of place (Dēsa), name (Nāmā), genus (Sāti), quality (Guṇā) and action (Kriya) occurs.[6] This elaborate process is called Kāṭchi or Pratyaksha.

Karudal or *Anumāṉa* is an inference of the presence of something unseen on the basis of that which is seen. It is of three kinds namely, the common (Podu or Sāmaṉya), from the result to the cause (Eccham or Sēsham), and from the cause to the result (Mudal or Pūrvam). When one hears the trumpeting sound of an elephant in the forest, he infers the presence or existence of the same animal, even though there is no inevitable connection (Annuvayam) between the trumpeting sound and the existence of an elephant. This is known as the common inference or the Sāmāṉya Anumāṉ (Podu).[8] The flood or spate in the river is inferred to be the result of heavy rains at the source of it. This is proceeding from the result to the cause which is known as Eccham or Sēsham.[9] When we see the heavy clouds collected in the sky, we infer that there will be downpour. This is proceeding from the cause to the result or the Mudal or Pūrvam.[10] So inference or Anumāna is a means of knowledge about something which is not seen

5 XXVII. 15 to 19.

6 Ibid. 20 to 24.

7 XXVII. 25 to 28.

8 Ibid. 29 to 32.

9 Ibid. 33 to 34.

10 Ibid. 35 to 36

directly, and this pertains to any one of the three tenses at a time namely the past, the present and the future.

Next comes *Upama* or similitude. This is to understand a certain thing which we have not seen by means of comparison or a simile. The understanding of a wild cow (Kavayamā) found in the jungle and unseen by one is made possible by bringing into one's mind's eye the domestic cow which he has very well seen.[11] In other words, upama is a means by which we proceed from the known to the unknown. Here we have to steer clear of a possible confusion between upama and Anumāṉa. Upama or similitude is brought in for the benefit of the others only, whereas Anumāṉa or Inference is not only for other but for us also. Further, the former proceeds from the seen to the unseen, while the latter is based on certain similarities of the known to the unknown. Also we have to bear in mind that the simile is always to be considered in its partial connotation and not in its entirety, because to say that a cow is like a cow is no simile at all.

The fourth one is authority or *Āgama.* This is to understand a thing by some authority or the writing of sages and seers. According to this, we take it for granted that there exist heaven and hell or the dēvās and demons.[12] Nobody has seen all these, but yet we believe in these solely on the authority of some works.

The fifth instrument is *Arthāpatti* or assumption. When an assertion is made about a shepherd's settlement on the Ganges, we understand by it that that settlement or village is situated on the banks of the river Ganges, and not on the surface of the waters.[13] This we simply assume. Arthā in Sanskrit means a thing or an object; Āpatti again in the same language means another object not in opposition to the former, but in association with the same. Some scholars like Gangēsar intepreted this pramāṇa on the basis of the following syllogisms.[14]

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11 Ibid. 41 to 42.

12 Ch. XXVII: 43 & 44.

13 Ibid. 45 to 46.

14 Ch. XXVII. Avvai S. Doraisamy Pillai's Commentary 415.

(i) He who will not eat is not one who can be fat.
This man is one who is fat.
Therefore, this man is not one who will not eat.
(In other words, he is one who will certainly eat.)

(ii) He who eats is one who must eat either in the day or in the night.
This man is one who will not eat in the day.
Therefore, this man is one who (certainly) eat in the night.

The sixth one is *Iyalbu* or *Svabhāva.* Suppose a passer-by wants the rider on an elephant to give him a stick (kōl), the rider can give only his *Aṅgusam* or the goad. Under the circumstances the goad stands for 'the stick.'[15]

Aitiham is a long accepted tradition. To say that there is a ghost in the tree is a tradition handed down from generation to generation and accepted as true, although nobody has seen it actually.[16]

Abhāvam is to negate something which is not in existence.[17] This negation of the existence of a thing will occur only in relation to Time and Space. To say that the sun never shines in the night is a total negation of the object in so far as the time factor is concerned and asserting the non-existence of the Alps in India is the same in relation to space.

The next instrument of knowledge is *Miṭchi* or understanding by elimination or correlation. When it is said that Rama was the victor in the battle, one would infer that Ravana was the vanquished.[18] The Sanskritists would call it Parisesha.

The tenth and the last one is Uḷḷaneṟi or Sambhava. This is to say that something happens as a course of nature.

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15 Ch. XXVII; 47 & 48.

16 Ch. XXVII: 49 & 50.

17 Ibid. 51 & 52.

18 Ibid. 53 & 54.

When a piece of iron moves, it can be inferred that there is magnet nearby.[19]

Pramāṇa-ābhāsās

There are eight Pramāṇa-ābhāsās.[20] These are:

1. Suttuṇarvu (knowing by direct contact)
2. Tiriyak-kōḍal (misconception)
3. Aiyam (doubt)
4. Tērādu Teḷidal (decision without conviction)
5. Kaṇḍunāramai (not knowing in spite of seeing)
6. Il-vaḻakku (asserting the existence of the non-existent)
7. Uṇarndadai Uṇardal (trying to know that which is evidently known)
8. Ni<u>n</u>aippu (assumption or expression)

These eight ābhāsās or absurdities are excluded from the purview of the above mentioned ten instruments of knowledge. Of these eight avoidables, *Suttaṇ̄arvu* is that by which we admit only the existence of an object in general, when we are presented with a dilemma as to what is that object exactly at a distance either a pillar or a man?[21] The commentator of the Neelakēsi, the great Vāma<u>n</u>āchārya, in this connection quotes an unknown stanza to point out that Suttuṇ̄arvu means to say that there is an object present without attempting to identify it by a process of elimination.[22] *Tiriyak-kōḍal* is mistaking one for the other. Taking the mother of pearl for pure silver is an instance.[23] *Aiyam* is doubtful nature. Being unsettled whether the object appearing before us at a distance is a stone-pillar or a human figure is one example.[24] *Tērādu-Teḷidal* is to take a decision without proper deliberation. To

19 Ibid. 55 & 56.

20 Ibid. 58 to 61.

21 Ch. XXVII. 61 & 62.

22 Neelakēsi. Dharma. Stanza 120 (Commentary).

23 Ch. XXVII. 63 & 64.

24 Ch. CCVII. 65 & 66.

exemplify this, the state of mistaking a pillar for a man is often quoted.[25] Tiruvaḷḷuvar also condemns this and enjoins on the king to avoid such a contingency.[26] *Kaṇḍunāramai* is not taking a creature for a tiger, and act accordingly in spite of seeing it coming straight.[27] *Il-vaḻakku* is to say that a rabbit has got horns. That is to assert the existence of something which really does not exist.[28] *Uṇarndadai uṇaral* is trying to prove that fire gives warmth to one who is in extremely cool atmosphere.[29] This is such a commonplace that it needs no proof whatsoever. Lastly *Niṉaippu* is to accept any statement without questioning its validity and truth just like accepting a man and a woman as one's father and mother on a mere statement of others.

So, on the basis of the above instruments of knowledge, six philosophical systems are founded. Given as under are the names of those systems with their respective authors or propounders against each:[31]

Systems		*Teachers*
1. Lōkāyatā	:	Brahaspati
2. Buddhism	:	Jina
3. Sāṅkhya	:	Kapila
4. Nayyāyika	:	Akshapāda
5. Vaisēshika	:	Kaṇāda
6. Mīmāmsa	:	Jaimini

Every one of the six teachers adopted one or more of the pramāṇās to acquire true knowledge.[32] The following will clearly show the name and number of the instruments employed by them individually.

25 Ibid. 67 & 68.

26 Tirukkural 510.

27 Ch. XXVII : 69 & 70.

28 Ch. XXVII : 71 & 72.

29 Ibid. 73 & 74.

30 Ibid. 75 & 77.

31 Ibid. 78 & 79.

32 Maṇi. Ch. XXVII. Commentary p. 421 (Avvai S. Doraisamy Pillai) and foot note.

Teachers		Pramanas
1. Brahaspati	:	Kāṭchi
2. Buddha (Jina)	:	Kāṭchi & Anumāna
3. Kapila	:	Kāṭchi, Anumāna & Āgama
4. Akshapāda	:	Kāṭchi, Anumāna, Āgama & Upama
5. Kaṇāda	:	Kāṭchi, Anumāna, Agama, Upama & Arthāpatti
6. Jaimini	:	Kāṭchi, Anumāna, Āgama, Upama, Arthāpatti & Ābhava

These are the six ultimate instruments of knowledge accepted and obtaining at present.[33]

2. Saiva Vāda

From the Pramāṇa Vādi, Maṇimēkalai went to the Saiva Vādi. To her enquiry that he might tell the truths contained in his creed, he explained the Saiva tenets as follows:[34] His God is Īsan or Īswaran meaning the possession of Iswarya (all things). Iraivan or God, according to him, is one who metes out justice to humanity. Though He is formless (Arūpi), He sometimes takes on a body which is not external in any way like ours, but the sun, the moon, the doer (Iyamanan), the five elements (Earth, Fire, Water, Air and Sky) all these eight constitute the body. He is the Creator, the Protector and the Destroyer of all things including the Universe. This three-fold duty is discharged easily in a playful mood. He has no equal to him nor any one else beyond Him. Such a One is his God. Appar, one of the four Saiva Āchāryas, has praised God in the same manner as having a body[35] composed of eight elements and hence He is called *Aṣṭamūrthy*.

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33 Ch. XXVII. 83 to 85.

34 Ch. XXVII. 86 to 95.

35 Thirumarai. VI: 91. 1.

3. Brahma Vāda

The Brahma-Vadi told Manimekalai that the entire universe was born out of one big egg laid by Brahma, the Super Being.[36] This is puranic in conception.

4. Vaishnava Vāda

The Vaishnava-Vādi then explained to her that Nārāyaṇā (Vishnu or Tirumāl) was the protector of all. He was the One who was well versed in the purāṇa describing the greatness of Vishnu, the sea-coloured God.[37]

5. Vēda Vādā

This is a system born of Vēdas. The Vēdā is otherwise called Āraṇā which is timeless and self-subsistent. According to this system,[38] the Vēdā is self-born and has neither a beginning nor an end. It is compounded of many queer elements. *Kalpa* constitutes its hands, *Chandās* its legs, *Gaṇitā* or Astronomy its eyes, *Nirukta* its ears, *Siksha* its nose and *Vyākaraṇa* its face. What Veda shows is the path of life. Parimēlaḻakar,[39] the famous commentator of the Tirukkuṟaḷ, also holds that the Vēdā has neither beginning nor ending. Mañimēkalai, having heard them, was not convinced and found all these teachings opposed to authority and practice. The Neelakēsi, a later Jaina work, also dismisses this Vēda Vādā, by dubbing it as Nāstikā creed.[40]

6. Ājīvaka Vādā

Maṇimēkalai then passed on to the Ājīvakavādi and asked him to let her know his doctrines as contained in his creed and what was his authority and ruling deity. The Ājīvaka Vādi replied:[41] His God is One whose knowledge knows no limits and who exists in all things. The subject matter of his system is five-fold. The five things are life,

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36 Ch. XXVII. 96 & 97.

37 Ch. XXVII. 98 & 99.

38 Ibid. 100 to 105.

39 Tirukkuṟaḷ 543 (commentary).

40 Neelakēsi. Vēda Vāda. Stanza 826.

41 Ch. XXVII. 110 to 165.

earth, water, fire and air. The last four elements are such that they can be felt and seen when they combine in themselves, and cannot be seen when broken up individually. The four elements namely earth, water, fire and air may together constitute a hill, tree, or body. They may also disintegrate and separate themselves as constituents. That which feels all this progress and phenomena is life itself'. Life according to the Neelakēsi is also an atom and this function of life is accepted by the author of the Neelakesi also.[42]

'Further earth is a hard surfaced solid; water is cool and fluid which slowly gets into earth and soaks underground; fire goes up in the form of flame and emits heat; air passes hither and thither. This is the nature of each of these elements. These atoms including life are called parama-aṇūs having no beginning or ending. Although these may change their forms, these cannot be finally destroyed. No other atom at any time comes anew and enters into another atom. The atom will not split into two, nor will it expand in size. These gather together and constitute a hill which may disintegrate into other forms of atoms. They may join together to assume the form of a tree. They may take the shape of a hollow bamboo; they may constitute the seed which grows; they may, like the full moon, become fertile land.'

'These elements such as earth etc. which are present in all sorts of things, exist as separate *bhūtās.* When they combine to make a whole in the proportion of one, three quarters, half and quarter, but being neither more nor less, get named in terms of that which predominates over the other. That is to say, if the earth predominates in proportion to the other three elements, then it will be name after earth, and so on and so forth. Unless these elements combine in this proportion, these will not assume the forms of hard earth, or fluid water, or warm fire or moving wind. The nature and function of each of these atoms can be seen only by those who have the divine eyes of knowledge. The ordinary people cannot understand them, nor can they see them individually when they are combined as *bhūtās,*

42 Neelakēsi, Stanza 674 to 676.

just as in the dusk of an evening one cannot see a single hair from the bundle of it.'

'According to this system of philosophy, people are born in six different stages taking six births before they ultimately attain the eternal bliss or vīdu or the never-to-be-born state. The six forms of birth are the black, the dark blue, the green, the red, the golden and the pure white birth. Those who did not want to be born again and suffer in this world should take the pure white birth, so that they may enjoy the eternal bliss in Heaven. This is the ascending order of births which one has to pass through and this process is called the righteous path.' The other path contrary to this is called the *Mandala-neṟi.* (the path of retrogression). Speaking about births such as black, dark blue etc. is not only acceptable to the Ājīvakās and Jains but also to Aruḷnandi-sivāchārya, the author of Sivagñāṉa Siddhiyār.[43]

'Gain and loss, pleasure and pain, birth and death all these good and bad things have their origin even from the very womb. Nobody can escape this inevitability. Happiness and sorrow are also called atoms. It is the previous fate that is responsible for one's good and bad state of affairs. This is the teaching contained in the philosophical treatise of Mārkaḻi.'[44]

7. Nigaṇḍa Vādā

Not being satisfied with the expounder of the Ājīvaka teacher, Maṇimēkalai went to the Nigaṇḍa-Vādi (Nirgrantha) and asked him to explain to her his doctrines as found in his authoritative works. He replied[45]: Our God is one who is worshipped by the Indras. The system expounded by him consists of the following ten sections.

1. Dhanmātikāya	: Principle of Movement
2. Adhanmātikāya	: Principle of Stationariness
3. Kāla	: Time
4. Ākāsa	: Sky
5. Jīva	: Soul or Life

43 Siddhiyār, Parapaksham. Ājīvakam. 7.

44 XVII. 110 to 170.

45 Ch. XXVII. 171 to 201.

6. The Paramānūs	: Indestructible Particles
7. Puṇyā (Nālvin̲ai)	: Good deeds
8. Pāva (Tivin̲ai)	: Bad deeds
9. Bandha (Kaṭṭu)	: Bondage
10. Mōksha (Viḍu)	: Release

The author of the Neelakēsi also enumerates the same number of sections of this system in the same order.[46]

'A thing, according to the teaching, enshrined in the Niganda Scripture, may remain intact with its inherent quality and innate nature. Or it may change and assume the characteristics of another object with which it is associated. Besides, a thing may show its permanence and impermanence at one and the same time. It may also exhibit the three-fold nature of appearance, existence and destruction. The state of sprouting and growing of a margosa seed into a tree makes the seed eternal, though the seed in its original form has disappeared. It is an instance for the theory of eternity. But when a margosa sapling instead of its seed, is planted and allowed to grow into a tree, the seed withers away and disappears while the tree stands as usual. It is cited as an instance for the theory of non-eternity. When peas are boiled and baked into a flour-paste, the quality and nature of the peas are not destroyed, though it is no more called peas.'

Then the Nirgrantha began to explain in detail the ten sections of his philosophical system above mentioned: '*Dhanmātikāya* is a principle of movement. It exists in everything at all times and pervades all through. It is the cause for the movement of everything. Similarly *Adhanmātikāya* or the principle of motionlessness is also eternal and all-pervasive and makes things static. *Kalpa* or time measures everything by its short unit of second or the immeasurably long Kalpa. *Ākāsa* or the sky gives accommodation for all sorts of things, big and small, to grow and to spread as they like. Jiva or life resides in and spreads all through the body and co-operates with it in enjoying the five sensations. The Parma-aṇu or the irreducible atom is the external form of an object and Jiva,

46 Neelakēsi. 288.

in combination with the body, does good or bad deeds. The result of this action is bondage or *Bandha.* The non-doing of either good or bad deeds will pave the way for getting away from bondage which in its turn leads to *Vīḍu* or *Nirvāṇā.*

8. Sāṅkhya Vādā

Then the teacher of the Sāṅkhya philosophy in response to Maṇimēkalai's enquiry gave her the following explanation;[47] 'The *Mūla Prakrti* or the Primary Element is the substance from which all things issue out. It is incapable of being conceived; it is made up of three qualities (guṇās); it is common to one and all. From such a Mūla Prakrti, arises Man or Buddhi; from this shoots up ākāsā (space); from ākāsā comes forth vāyu (air); from vāyu emanates fire (agni); from fire springs water; from this ultimately arises earth. When all these above elements combine together, there springs up ma<u>n</u>as or mind; from the mind comes out ahaṅkārā or the individual ego.'

'Now again sound comes out from akasa or space which is heard by the ear; Vāyu or air comes from the sense of touch experienced by the body; from fire arises light seen by the eye; from water is got taste enjoyed by the tongue; from the earth springs the sense of smell experienced by the nose. Thus the five gnana Indriyas or sense organs spring from the Pañcha-Bhūtās or five elements. From the body, five Ka<u>n</u>ma-Indriyās or Work-Organs spring up. Those organs are Vākku (speech), Pādham (feet), Pāṇi (hand), Pāyuru (excretal organs) and Upastha (generative organs). The five Bhūtas or elements, namely earth, fire, water, air and space undergo some transformation themselves as a result of which hills, trees etc. come up. All these things that appear in the universe by a process of transformation of the Bhutās, will get themselves merged in the Mūla-Prakrti or Primary Element which alone will stand unaffected and eternal.

'Apart from all the gñā<u>n</u>a-indriyas and ka<u>n</u>ma-indriyas, there is another object within the body called the *Purusha.* It is very easily conceivable. It does not have the three qualities (satva, rajas and tamas). It has no common features with the Mūla-Prakrti, nor does it serve as a mould

47 Ch. XXVII. 202 to 240.

where any other thing can be cast. But it can be felt by us, since it is a unity, all-pervasive and eternal. The presence of thie *Purushā* can be felt only by the mind. And the things understood by Purusha (Ātma) are twenty five. These are analysed as under:

1. Earth 2. Water 3. Fire 4. Air 5. Space
These are the five elements or the Bhūtās.

1. Body 2. Tongue 3. Eyes 4. Nose 5. Ears
These are the five sense organs or the gñāna-indriyas.

1. Taste 2. Light or Sight 3. Touch 4. Sound 5. Smell
These are the five sensationals or the Tanmatras.

1. Tongue or Mouth 2. Hands 3. Legs 4. Excretary organs (Pāyuru), 5. Genetive Organs (Upastha). These are the five work-organs or Physical functionaries or the Kanma-indriyas.

1. Mind (Manas)
2. Intelligence (Buddhi)
3. Self-consciousness (Akaṅkāra)
4. Subjectivation (chittam)
5. Life (Tamil - Uyir; Ātman; Upanishadic).

These above twenty five are called the Tatvās or Entities.

9. Vaisēshika Vādā

Then Maṇimēkalai passed on to the expounder of the Vaisēshika Vādā. He began to explain to her the fundamental doctrines of his system thus:[48]

'The Vaisēshika system consists of six divisions or categories. These are Substance (Dravya or Poruḷ), Quality (Guṇa), Action (Karma), Genus (Sāmānya or Podu), Species (Visēsha) and Collectivity (Samavāya). Of these six Padārthās or divisions, the first one, the substance has two characteristics namely quality and action and this is the cause of all. This substance or Dravya falls under nine heads namely earth, water, fire, air, space, direction, time, soul or Ānmā and mind. Of these nine, earth possesses all the five qualities of sound, touch, colour or sight, taste and smell. The remaining four (water, fire, air and space) do have qualities each less by one in the order given above.

48 Ch. XXVII. 241 to 262.

That is to say,

Water possesses four qualities : sound, touch, sight and taste.

Fire possesses three qualities : sound, touch and sight.

Air possesses two qualities : sound and touch.

Space possesses one quality : sound.

The substance or Matter is possessed of the following qualities: sound, touch, sight, taste and smell and largeness, smallness, hardness, softness, rightness, thinness and shape of form, right-side, left-side, nobility, baseness, being in the front, being in the rear, etc. Matter and quality are intended for activities. Then Sāmāṉya or the Universal is that which indicates the existence of things. This Sāmāṉya is of two kinds, the Para-Sāmāṉya (the higher universal) and the Apara-Sāmāṉya (the lower universal)'. The Neelakēsi also classifies Samanya into two kinds namely Mahā Sāmāṉya and Avāntara Sāmāṉya and this universal element Sāmāṉya is an eternal and all-pervading category which is responsible for the presence of similarity in things.[49] 'Just as going and coming are common to all things, death and existence also constitute the essence of all Matter. Visēsha (particularity) is not a quality common to all things, but a special characteristic of certain things only. Samavāya, the last of the above mentioned categories is responsible for the conjoining of things with their qualities and actions (guṉās and karmās).'

10. Bhūta Vādā

Lastly Maṇimēkalai asked the Bhūtavādi to explain his system of philosophy. He said:[50] 'Just as the intoxicating drink is obtained by the combination of two things, the taduki flower and jaggery, so also the consciousness of feeling springs by the combination of the five Bhūtās. This consciousness which is the resultant effect of the combination of five Bhūtās disappears when they

49 Neelakēsi with Prof. A. Chakravarthi's English Translation, Chap. VIII p. 282.

50 Ch. XXVII 264 to 276.

disintegrate themselves into their original parts, just as the sound of a drum ceases when it stops functioning. The Bhūtās or five elements are of two kinds, the conscious Bhūtās and the non-conscious Bhūtās. The combination of the former produces life and that of the latter causes the presence of the physical body. It is here that the pure materialists (Ulakāyata - vādis) differ from the Bhūtavādis. This is the reality. Pratyaksha Pramāṇā or sense perception alone is a valid instrument and the Anumāṉa (Inference) etc. are false and invalid. The causes and effects are all conditions of this birth only. To say that there is another birth and whatever we do in this birth will ultimately produce its effects in another birth is false and has no basis at all'. Having heard all this, Maṇimēkalai began to think for herself and said: 'Though none of these systems is agreeable, I shall not try to reply to them.' Then she laughed at the Bhūtavādi who denied the possibility of having knowedge about one's previous birth. Further Maṇimēkalai asked him if he could recognise his father and mother by any other means except by anumāṉa or inference. So too, the ultimate truth of things cannot be got at by means other than the pramāṇās. Therefore, she said, 'Don't say that the Pratyaksha is the only reliable and dependible way of knowing things. Thus, she heard all the five systems of philosophy namely Vaidīkavādā comprising the Prāmāṇā, Saiva, Brahma, Vaishnava and Vēda Vādās, the *Jaiṉa Vādā* consisting of the Ājīvaka and the Nigaṇḍa Vādās, the *Sāṉkhya Vādā, the Vaisēshika Vādā and the Bhūtavādā.*

THE BUDDHIST LOGIC

Kāṭchi (Perception)

Thereupon Maṇimēkalai went to Kāñchi and met Aṟavaṇa Adigal, the famous Buddhist teacher and requested him to expound the teachings contained in the Buddhist Philosophy. Adigaḷ said: 'According to Jinēndra, the first Buddhist teacher, the instruments of cognition are only two, the Pratyaksha and the Anumāṉā. These two are flawless and valid. Suttuṇarvu is considered to be Pratyaksha or Kāṭchi. Name (Nāma), class or species (Jāti), quality (Guṇa), and Actions (Krya) are all excluded from Pratyaksha,

since these aspects are applicable to Anumāna̱ (Inference) also.[51]

Anumāna̱ (Inference)

'Anumāna̱ is of three kinds, namely Kāraṇa Anumāna̱ (the causal), Kārya Anumāna̱ (the consequential), and the Sāmānya Anumāna̱ (the common). This threefold Anumāna̱ is liable to lead us to wrong conclusions. But the Kārya Anumāna̱ or the consequential one of the inferring the presence of fire when smoke is seen is the only valid instrument of knowledge. All the other Pramāṇās such as Āgama etc. are but of secondary importance, as they can be very well included in Anumāna̱."[52]

'Anumāna̱ is constituted by the following namely Pakkam or Paksha (Proposition), Hētu (Reason), Tiṭṭāntam or Dristāna (Example), Upanayam (Application), Nigamanam (Conclusion). Of these constituents,[53]

1. *Pakkam* is to say, 'This mountain has fire in it'.
2. *Hētu* is to say, 'This mountain has fire, because it smokes.'
3. *Tiṭṭāntam* is to say, 'It smokes just like a kitchen'
4. *Upanaya* is to say,'This mountain also emits smoke.'
5. *Nigamanam* is to say, 'Whatever emits smoke must necessarily have fire in it'.

To say that whatever has no fire in it, will not smoke, is the contrary of Pakkam or Proposition and this contrariety is called the *Vaitanmya-Tiṭṭāntam.*[54] When we analyse pure action (Tūya Kāryam) in relation to *Svabhāva,* we get what is known as the *Pakka dhanma vachanam* or the attribute of the proposition or the subject. This will take the form, 'sound is not eternal.'[55] To state, "that which is made is

51 Ch. XXIX. 47 to 51.
52 Ibid. 52 to 56.
53 Ch. XXIX. 57 to 63.
54 Ibid 64 to 67.
55 Ibid. 68 to 71

not eternal, like a pot" is known as Sapakkam.[56] The contrary statement of the above, "whatever is not made and not eternal like 'Space' is Vipakkam.[57]

Next the Buddhist teacher deals with what is called the *Ananvaya Pramāṇā*. According to this, to say that there is no pot in this open space is *Pakkam* or proposition and to state that is so, because it is not seen, is *Pakka dhanma Vachanam* or the attribute of the proposition.[58] Since we have never seen the horns of a rabbit, it has no horns' is *Sapakkam* according to this method of argument and, 'whatever exists will be seen like a myrabolam in the open hand' is the contrary of the former and known as *Vipakkam.*[59] It is only thus that reason or Hētu proves the factual existence.

Now, the existence of smoke (consequence) proves the existence of fire (cause). It may be asked, how? It is proved so, because of the fact that whenever smoke appears, there ought to be fire (Anvayam), and because there is no fire, there is no smoke also (Vedirēkam or the negative concomitance).[60]

The fallacy of Hētu (Reason)

If, according to the above arguments and methods of proof, the Hētu were to justify the existence of a fact or an object, we can as well argue like this:[61] It is said that fire is the cause of the smoke. The smoke that comes out of the fire has two qualities or characteristics. It will either go upwards or will bend sideways and spread out. These two characteristics, therefore, are the resultant effect of the existence of fire. So then can we straightway say that the two-fold aspect of the smoke, the going upwards and the bending sideways, will necessarily prove the existence of fire? Obviously it will be a fallacy to do so. And hence

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56 Ch. XXIX. 72 to 73

57 Ibid. 74 to 76

58 Ibid. 78 to 80

59 Ibid. 81 to 84

60 Ibid. 85 to 90

61 Ch. XXIX. 90 to 95

the futility of proving the cause by the consequence or the *Kārya Hētu*.

The fallacy of Anvaya Anumāṉā (Identical Inference)

This method also is not effective in establishing the fact. 'At one time a person sees a donkey and a dancing girl, both at a given place. At another time when that man sees a donkey alone, he should, according to the *Anvaya Anumāṉā*, infer the existence of a dancing girl also. Is this reasoning sound? No. This will never be. Hence the fallacious nature of this sort of an Inference.'[62]

The Fallacy of Vetirēkam (Negative Concomitance)

To say that there is no smoke, because, there is no fire is what is called the negative concomitance. But this reasoning is not always and at all times valid. If this way of reasoning or confirming the existence of an object is stretched for other situations or for a different set of objects it would, prove not only futile, but also ridiculous. For instance, we do not see the tail of a dog on the mane of an ass, nor the tail of a fox on it. In another place we see the tail of a fox. Will it be possible for us now to infer the existence of the tail of a dog on the fox, because we have not seen the tails of both on the mane of the ass? Not at all. Thus trying to prove the existence of an object by its negative concomitance is not valid not admissible in all cases.[63]

The Logical Proposition

Paksha (Proposition), Hētu (Reason) and Drishtānta (example) each of these three falls under two heads namely the valid, and the invalid. The valid proposition consists of two things namely the subject (Dhanmi) that is apparent and its attributes (Sādhyadhanmā) and the changes those attributes undergo. For instance,

Sound is either eternal or non-eternal is a logical proposition. Here in this proposition, *Sound* (Sabdha) is the

62 Ibid. 96 to 101.

63 Ch. XXIX. 101 to 108.

subject (dhanmi) and either eternal or non-eternal is the attribute (sādhyadhanma).[64] The term is called *copula* in modern logic. Hētu or Reason is of three kinds namely (1) that which is attributed to or characteristic of the subject, (2) that which may be attributed to a similar subject (Sapaksha) and that which is not ascribable to the opposite (Vipaksha).[65] In order that Sapaksha might be proved, the attributes of the subject should be made applicable generally. When the non-eternality of sound has to be established, a similar subject having non-eternality as its attribute must be brought along with it. For instance, sound is non-eternal like a pot. Here the attribute of non-eternality generally applies to both sound and the pot. If the opposite Vipaksha is to be proved the proposition should be like this: Whatever is not non-eternal is not made like ether (ākāsā). The valid drishtanta (example) is two-fold, Sadhanmyam (similar attribute) and Vaidhanmyam (different attribute). Whatever is made is non-eternal like a pot. This is an example for Sādhanmya.[66] The Nyāyappravēsa also gives the same example for the Sādhanmya drishtānta.[67] The Vaidanmya drishtānta indicates the non-existence of the reason when the conclusion does not exist.[68] These are valid means of proof.

The invalid paksha, hētu, and drishtānta (eḍuttukkāṭṭu) are (1) the fallacious paksha (2) the fallacious hētu (3) the fallacious eḍuttukkāṭṭu (example). Of these three, the fallacious paksha (proposition) consists of nine kinds. They[69] are (1) Pratyaksha Viruddham (2) Anumāṉā Viruddham (3) Suvachana Viruddham (4) Lōka Viruddham (5) Āgama Viruddham (6) Aprasiddha Visēshanam (7) Aprasiddha Visēshiyam (8) Aprasiddha Upayam (9) Aprasiddha Sambandam. The following explanation of the fallacies may be noted:

64 XXIX. 111 to 121.
65 Ibid. 121 to 124.
66 Ibid. 138 to 139.
67 Sentamil Vol. 32 No. 3 p.61.
68 XXIX. 140 to 141.
69 XXIX. 143 to 153.

(1) *Pratyaksha Viruddham*[70] is to say the contrary of what is perceived by the sense-organs. For instance, to say 'sound will never be heard by the ear' is the Pratyaksha Viruddham.

(2) *Anumāṉā Viruddham*[71] is to say the contrary of what is inferred. For example, to say 'the non-eternal or the impermanent pot is eternal or permanent; may be cited here.

(3) *Suvachana Viruddham*[72] consists in contradictory speech. To say 'my mother is a barren woman' is an example in point.

(4) *Lōka Viruddham*[73] is to deny the established truth or the experience of the wise. For instance to say 'the shining moon is not moon' is lōka viruddham. Here we can quote the Kuṟaḷ[74] as the further evidence. 'He who denies the existence of what the world believes in, will be held as an evil spirit that walks the earth.'

(5) *Āgama Viruddham*[75] consists in saying the opposite of the accepted facts that any book of authority may give to the Vaisēshika or the non-eternalist. He who usually believes that sound is non-eternal were to say that sound is eternal, then his statement goes against the established authority or his Āgama.

(6) *Aprasiddha Visēshanam*[76] consists in the opponent not understanding that which can be proved. The Bauddha and the Sāṅkya are opposed to each other in ideology. The Sāṅkya is an eternalist, whereas the Bauddha is a non-eternalist. And when the Bauddha tells the Sāṅkya, his opponent, that sound is non-eternal, the state of non-eternality of sound on the part of the Sāṅkya becomes fallacious.

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70 Ibid. 154 to 156.
71 Ibid. 157 to 159.
72 Ibid. 160 to 161.
73 XXIX. 162 to 163.
74 Kuṟaḷ 850.
75 XXIX. 164 to 166.
76 XXIX. 167 to 172.

(7) *Aprasiddha Visēshiyam*[77] is to say that the predication of the proposition is not known to the opponent. The Sāṅkya is one who believes in the existence of a soul, while the Bauddha does not. If the Sāṅkya were to tell the Bauddha, his opponent, that the soul is one which is endowed with the faculty of understanding, then this proposition itself is aprasiddha visēshiyam.

(8) *Aprasiddha Upayam*[78] results when both the proposition and the conclusion are not quite agreeable to the opponent. The Vaisēshika believes that the soul is the cause for happiness, sorrow, desire, etc., while the Bauddha does not believe in the very existence of the soul itself. Under these circumstances, if the Vaisēshika were to tell the Bauddha that the soul is an entity and it is capable of experiencing the worldly pleasures and pain, his opponent, the Buddha would not accept either the proposition or the conclusion.

(9) *Aprasiddha Sambandam*[79] lies in telling the opponent what he naturally believes to be true. If the opponent, the Buddha were to be told that sound he non-eternal, this statement need not be proved, as he himself is convinced of it. Thus it becomes a fallacy.

In this connection it must be remembered that these fallacies are arrived at, based on the creeds or faiths of the concerned religionists and they are not fallacies of a general kind, appealing just to the rational faculty of all men without relation to their faiths and creeds. In fact, they are narrowed to the particular faith of the religionists. "Of course we have Zeno's example who quaintly tries to prove that nothing in the world is in motion; but such conclusions are taken to be the fallacies by the generality of mankind."

Some fallacies

Now, Ētuppōli or fallacious reasoning is of three kinds[80] namely (1) Asiddham or the unaccepted, (2) Anai-

77 Ibid. 173 to 178.

78 XXIX. 179 to 185.

79 Ibid. 186 to 190.

80 XXIX. 191 to 192.

Kāntikam or the doubtful and (3) Viruddham or the contradictory. Of these three, the first namely Asiddham is of four categories. They are (1) Upaya-siddham, (2) Anyathā-siddham, (3) Siddhā-siddham and (4)Asryā siddham. The term 'Anyadhāsiddham' is spelt as Anyatharā-siddham' in the Ñyāyappravēsa, and the late scholar Tirunārāyaṇa Iyeṅgar teneded to appreciate the latter reading and concluded that the reading in the Maṇimēgalai should be emended. The proofs for the four-fold fallacious reasoning are given below:

(1) *Upaya siddham*[82] is one of the four fallacious reasonings which is not acceptable to both the contending parties. This is substantiated by the argument,

All *that is seen* is eternal
Sound is one *that is seen*
Therefore, sound is eternal

In this argument, *that is seen* is the middle term or hētu or reason that abides in both the major premise and the minor premise. This middle term is not agreeable to both the parties.

(2) *Anyadha siddham*[83] is a way of fallacious reasoning where the predication of the subject is not accepted by the opposite party. The following argument illustrates this:

Sound is a *product*
It is one that has evolved
Therefore Sound is non-eternal

In this syllogism, the predicate *product* of the subject term *Sound* is not accepted by the Sāṅkya who is the opposing party.

(3) *Siddha Siddham*[84] consists in the reason or the middle term being dubious in arriving at the conclusion. The following argument may be cited as an example:

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81 Sentamil̠ Vol. 32 No. 8 pp. 207 to 208.

82 XXIX. 195 to 197.

83 Ibid. 198 to 202.

84 XXIX. 203 to 206.

All that is seen is *smoke or mist*
Smoke is one that indicates fire
Therfore, All that is seen is fire

In this syllogism, the middle term *smoke or mist* is doubtful, and therefore the conclusion arrived at thereof is naturally invalid. Hence the conclusion is not accepted.

(4) *Asryā siddham*[85] is another fallacious reasoning where the middle term is proved to the opposing party to be non-existent. The argument is:

All *that has the quality of sound* is a substance
Ether is one *that has the quality of sound*
Therefore, Ether is a substance

The conclusion is not accepted by the opponent who believes that ether is not a substance. So, the middle term *that has the quality of sound* is non-existent according to the opposing party.

Anaikāntikam

It consists of six forms.[86] They are,

1. Sādhāraṇa
2. Asādhāraṇa
3. Sapakkaika Dēsavirudhi Vipakkavyāpi
4. Vipakkaika Dēsavirudhi Sapakkavyāpi
5. Upaiyika Dēsavirudhi and
6. Virudha Viyapisari

Of these,

(1) *Sādhāraṇa*[87] consists in the middle term or reason being uncertain both in the Sapakka and the Vipakka. This is substantiated by the example:

All *that is cognizable* is non-eternal
Sound is *cognizable*
Therefore, Sound is non-eternal

85 Ibid. 207 to 211.
86 Ibid. 211 to 216.
87 XXIX. 217 to 223.

Here the middle term 'that is cognizable' can be applied to the eternal things like ether as well as to the non-eternal things like pot. Hence the uncertainty.

(2) *Asādhāraṇa*[88] is a fallacy in which the reason is non-existent either in the Sapakka or in the Vipakka. This is illustrated by the following syllogism:

All that is *audible* is eternal
Sound is *audible*
Therefore sound is eternal

Here the major premise *All that is audible is eternal* is not generally accepted. It is doubtful.

(3) Sapakkaika Dēsavirudhi Vipakkavyapi[89] lies in that the middle term or reason pertains to some of the similar things of all the dissimilar things. The example is:

All that is non-eternal is the *product of endeavour*
Sound is *the product of endeavour*
Therefore Sound is non-eternal

Sound abides in lightning which is non-eternal and it also abides in ether which is eternal. Here the reason or the middle term namely *All that is non-eternal is the product of endeavour* is open to doubt. For, non-eternal things like pot etc. are both products of endeavour and are not the products of endeavour like ether. Hence doubtful.

(4) *Vipakkaika Dēsavirudhi Sapakkavyāpi*[90] is in that the reason or the middle term applies to some of the dissimilar things and it is applicable to all things that are similar. The illustration is:

All non-eternal things are products of endeavour
Sound is non eternal

Therefore, Sound is a product of endeavour. The reason or the middle term *Non-eternal* abides in both ākāsā and lightning that are dissimilar or heterogeneous things; for it is apparently shown in lightning and not shown in

88 Ibid. 223 to 230

89 XXIX. 231 to 242.

90 Ibid. 243 to 253

ākāsā. The quality of non-eternality abides in all the homogeneous or similar things like pot. Doubt is therefore thrown on the non-eternality of things expecially when it is related to the products of endeavour. In lightning sound is not the product of endeavour; but in the case of pot, it is certainly a product of endeavour. Hence the fallacy. The major premise itself is open to question.

(5) *Upaya Dēsavirudhi*[91] consists in the middle term being applicable to some of the similar things and some of the dissimilar things. The example is:

All *formless* things are eternal
Sound is *formless*
Therefore, Sound is eternal

In this argument the middle term *formless* or the reason of formlessness abides in ether as well as in the minutest atoms that are homogeneous or similar in that they are both eternal and therefore formless. Likewise, with the heterogeneous or dissimilar things like pot and happiness, the middle term namely *formlessness* abides in happiness and not in a pot. Here the major premise *All formless things are eternal* itself is open to doubt. For, happiness, though formless like ākāsā, is not eternal, but definitely non-eternal like the pot. Hence the fallacy.

(6) *Viruddha Vyapisāri*[92] is in that the middle term is not exactly the reason. For example,

All that is *the product of endeavour* is eternal
Sound is *the product of endeavour*
Therefore, sound is eternal.

The pot, a non-eternal thing, is really a product of endeavour. Sound is eternal, but it is also a product of endeavour. So, in this case, both the eternal (sound) and the non-eternal (pot) are products of endeavour. The middle term or reason *the product of endeavour* applies equally to the eternal as well as non-eternal things. Hence the fallacy.

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91 XXIX: 254 to 266.
92 XXIX. 267 to 274.

Virudha

This is of four kinds namely,[93]

(1) Dhanmasvarūpa Viparīta Sādhanam

(2) Dhanma Vishēda Viparīta Sādhanam

(3) Dhanmisvarūpa Viparīta Sādhanam and

(4) Dhanmi Vishēda Viparīta Sādhanam

Having explained the fallacies, the author goes to explain the *Dhrishtānta Ābhāsās.* It has already been stated that Dhrishtāntā is of two kinds namely *Sādhanmyā* (similar) and Vaidhanmyā (dissimilar). Of these two, Sādhanmyā falls under five heads.[94] They are,

(1) Sādhana Dhanma Vikalam

(2) Sādhya Dhanma Vikalam

(3) Upaya Dhanma Vikalam

(4) Ananvayam and

(5) Viparīta Ananvayam

Vaidhanmya[95] is also of five categories. They are,

(1) Sādhya Avya Virudhi

(2) Sādhana Avya Virudhi

(3) Upaya Avya Virudhi

(4) Avya Vetirēka and

(5) Viparīta Vetirēka

These fallacious examples have been discussed threadbare in the epic and a clear understanding of the correct method of reasoning to get at the correct knowledge has been urged upon.

93 Ibid. 275 to 280.

94 XXIX. 328 to 339.

95 Ibid. 402 to 468.

The Nidhānās:

In one of the fore-going sections in this thesis, reference was already made to the twelve nidhānās. These nidhanas or conditions will have to be destroyed, if one wants to swim across the deep ocean of existence. These nidhānās are interlinked, one issuing from another as cause and effect, so that they ultimately form a chain of causes and effects. Even as they disappear, they do so one after another. If the first of the twelve nidhānās disappears, the next in order automatically follows suit, and so on and so forth.[96] The nidhānās again fall under four categories having three joints.[97] The first category comprises (1) ignorance and (2) action, the second comprises (3) consciousness, (4) name and form, (5) the sense organs, (6) sensuous feelings and (7) experience, the third consisting in (8) thirst, (9) attachment and (10) existence and the fourth category comprising (11) birth and (12) the result.

Of these twelve conditions of existence, appearance in birth is of three kinds[98] namely the form (human), the formless (heavenly) and the kāmā (the lower). And the time of appearance is also of three divisions namely the past, the present and the future.[99] The nidhānās are the root cause of all sorrow and misery, and a proper understanding of the nature of these faults leads one to the never-to-be-born state or the permanent release (Nirvāṇā).[100]

These nidhānās are usually explained or discussed in relation to the Four Truths, the Five Skandhās and the Six Conventions (Vaḻakku).[101] Further these will result in four forms of excellence. They are apt to be interrogated in four ways and capable of four-fold reply. 'They neither

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96 XXX: 16 to 25.
97 Ibid. 25 to 26.
98 Ibid. 27 to 28.
99 XXX. 27 & 28 with commentary.
100 Ibid. 29 to 31.
101 Ibid. 32 to 34.

appear nor disappear. They are a series of continuity with no final destruction. Neither do they make nor are they made by others. They neither represent the *self,* nor are possessed by other *selves.* They neither go forth nor come back. They cannot be ended, nor they can end themselves. They are themselves the result of action, birth and release.'[102]

If only men and women do realise the significance and implications of these twelve nidhānās in their true perspective, they will certainly reach Heaven. If, on the other hand, they do not strive to do so, then they will have to go to Hell where they will suffer untold miseries. So a clear grasp of these nidhānās, one by one, is a pre-requisite to every Buddhist to attain Nirvāṇā.

(1) *Ignorance (Pēdamai)*[103] results in not understanding the four-fold Truth, in being caught in delusion and in believing what others say to the utter neglect of that which one is able to see for oneself or infer rightly. For, example to believe the statement of others, when they say, on being enquired, that a rabbit has got horns is sheer ignorance or Pēdamai. For, one can see for oneself whether or not it has horns.

(2) *Action (Karma):*[104] There are three worlds namely Upper (Heaven), the Middle (Earth) and the Lower (Nether World). In all these three kinds of worlds, the living beings are multibillion. All beings are one or other of the six namely, the human beings, gods, Brahma, the hell-dwellers and the animals and the spirits. This six-fold state of birth is the result of one's good or bad actions. These deeds both good and bad assert themselves even at the very embryonic stage. The good deeds bring forth happiness and the bad ones lead to sorrow and misery.

The bad deeds or actions are ten in number. These ten evils arise from the body, speech and mind. Murder, theft and passion are the three deeds of evil issuing out of

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102 Ibid. 37 to 44.

103 XXX. 37 to 44.

104 Ibid. 55 to 81.

body. Falsehood, back-biting, harsh words and indulging in useless talk are the four evils resulting from tongue or speech. Covetousness, anger and illusion are the three evil deeds arising out of the mind. Men of right thinking and wisdom will truly and clearly understand the evil nature of these ten deeds and surely escape the evil consequences resulting from them.

The good action (nalvin̲ai) is to keep oneself away from the clutches of the above ten evils and to subject oneself to hard discipline (Sīlam). Further, one should engage oneslef in doing deeds of charity (Dhān̲am) and thereby get qualified to be born either as man or god or Brahma, so that he may enjoy the fruits thereof.

(3) *Consciousness (Uṇarvu)*[105] is the mere state of being conscious. It will never lead to any action. It is such a state of mind that is found in a man who is deep asleep. It is inert.

(4) *Name and Form (Aru-uru)*[106] consists in having the feeling mentioned above abiding in the constitution of the body and life.

(5) *Sense Organs (Vāyil)*[107] are those organs that along with mind carry the consciousness of its consummation when the object perceived becomes clear or patent.

(6) *Sensuous Feeling or Contact (Uru)*[108] lies in that the five sense organs and the mind come into contact with the external things.

(7) *Experience (Naharvu)*[109] is to actually enjoy the fruits thereof.

(8) *Thirst (Vēṭkai)*[110] lies in that there is no satisfaction whatsoever in one's enjoyment.

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105 XXX: 82 & 83.

106 Ibid. 84 & 85.

107 XXX. 86 & 87.

108 Ibid. 88 & 89.

109 Ibid. 90.

110 Ibid. 91.

(9) *Attachment (Parru)*[111] consists in the strong desire to enjoy further, because there is no satisfaction.

(10) *Existence (Pāvam)*[112] results in the collection or the sum-total of all the deeds both good and bad and in calmly reaping the consequence thereof.

(11) *Birth (Tōnral)*[113] consists in the result or the consequence of his past deeds. According as the deeds are good or bad, one or the other of the six births takes place, following the law of cause and effect.

(12) *Disease (Piṇi)*[114] is the result of the change of circumstances and conditions that affect the body. This may set in in relation to his deeds also. In short, this is a bodily ailment. Old age (Mūppu) indicates the wear and tear of the physical body due to constant striving till death. Death (Sākkāḍu) results in that the body ultimately disappears as the sun sets.

The Law of Causation

'From ignorance comes action; from action issues consciousness; from consciousness spring forth the name and the form; from the name and the form arise the sense organs; from the sense-organs results contact or sensuous feeling;from contact comes out experience; from experience arises thirst; from thirst issues attachment; from attachment comes existence; from existence springs up birth; birth results in disease, old age and death. So life is a never-ending circle of experience. Conversely putting it, when ignorance ceases, action will cease; when action stops, consciousness will go; with consciousness, name and form will disappear; when name and form go, sense-organs will cease to fucntion; when they cease to function, contact with things external will not take place; when contact does not take place, experience is no more possible; when experience is no more possible, thirst will cease; there will

111 Ibid. 92.

112 Ibid. 93 & 94.

113 Ibid. 95 to 97.

114 XXX. 98 to 103.

be no attachment; with no attachment, there is no existence; with no existence birth ceases to take place; when birth ceases, there will be no disease, no old age and no death. In this way the never-ending chain of sorrows and miseries will be destroyed.[115]

The Four Divisions[116]

Ignorance (Pēdamai) and action (ceykai) these two nidhānās or conditions of existence form the first division, as they are causes for all other evils. Consciousness, name and form, sense-organs, contact and experience these five go to make the second division, as these are the direct outcome of the former division. Thirst, desire and the collection of deeds, these three constitute the third division, as these are the evils arising from the previous five. Birth, disease, old age and death, these form the fourth and last division, as they are the physical ailments consequent upon one's birth on the earth.

The Three Joints[117]

The conjoining of action and consciousness that is the real cause of birth, is the first joint; that of experience and thirst is the flawless second joint; the collection of deeds both good and bad, and the birth that is to come about constitute the third and last joint. These are the three joints in the unbroken chain of twelve nidhānās.

The Three Births[118]

Births are of three kinds. They are births as men, gods and animals. To know that acquisition of supreme wisdom (samādhi gñāṉam) automatically leads to Nirvāṇā (Viḍu) is what is known as the non-corporeal birth (Aruvap-piṟappu). Taking a physical form permeated with passive consciousness inside is called the corporeal birth (Uruva-p-piṟappu). Taking a new form with consciousness at work or active consciousness is the birth of men, gods and animals (Kāmā dhātu).

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115 XXX 104 to 133.

116 Ibid. 134 to 147.

117 Ibid. 148 to 152.

118 XXX. 153 to 158 with commentary.

The Three Times[119]

Times are three in number. They are the past, the present and the future. Of these three, the past comprises ignorance and action; the present consists of consciousness, name and form, sense-organs, contact, experience, thirst, desire, existence and birth; and the future includes disease old age, death, sorrow, misery, etc.

The Big Three[120]

The twelve nidhānās referred to above are distributed under three broad heads namely the evils, the deeds and the result or consequences. Thirst, desire and ignorance constitute the evils; existence and action constitute the deeds; and consciousness, birth, old age, disease, death, etc., fall under consequences.

The Noble Four[121]

Aravāṇa Adigaḷ, the Buddhist teacher in the epic, now begins to describe the nature of Nirvāṇā (Viḍu). The three divisions of Nidhānās namely the evils, the deeds and the results are all sources of sorrow and pain. The physical bodies that come about due to the interaction of the different nidhānās are all liable to decay and disappear. Analysing this way, one has to conclude that there is nothing like ātman or individual self in any of the species higher or lower. A proper understanding of this will lead to the ultimate release. In this connection the famous four-fold Truth is discussed as follows:

(1) *Suffering* is constituted by consciousness, name and form, sense-organs, contact, experience, birth, disease, old age and death. Sorrow, agony, anxiety and helplessness, these are also included in suffering.

(2) *Cause of Suffering:* Ignorance, action, thirst, desire and the collection of deeds are the causes of suffering on earth.

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119 Ibid. 159 to 168.

120 XXX. 169 to 174.

121 Ibid. 175 to 188.

(3) *Mitigation of Suffering:* Desire is the root-cause of birth and sorrow.

(4) *Way to mitigate Suffering:* Removal of desire in all its aspects will pave the way for mitigation of all suffering and ultimately for happiness and mōksha (Viḍu).

The Skandhas and convention[122]

The Skandhās are five in number. They are (1) form (2) experience (3) indication (Kuṟippu), (4) the definite, (5) the true and (6) the untrue.

1. *The Collective convention* is to say the physical body is composed of many atoms (dhātu); water contains a number of drops; and a country comprises a good number of villages, big and small.

2. *The Evolutionary Convention:* This is to say that the seed is the first one; from the seed comes out the shoot; and from the shoot, the plant takes shape.

3. *The Dominant Convention:* This is to bring out that which is dominant among several qualities of an object. A thing or an object will either appear or disappear or become old. To point out that which dominates among the above three characteristics is an example in point.

4. *The Definite Convention:* A word is made up of letters. When we say this, we are not sure of the exact number of letters that go to make the word. If, on the other hand, we say that such and such month in the year has so many days, the number of days for that particular month is definite. For example, 'Thirty days have September, April, June and November.'

5. *The True Convention (Uḷ-Vaḻakku) :* This is to insist on that which really exists. For example, 'A horse has four legs.'

6. *The Unique Convention (Il-Vaḻakku):* This is to deny that which does not exist. For instance, 'The rabbit has no horns.'

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122 XXX. 189 to 216.

The Questions and Answers[123]

There are, according to the Buddhist teaching, four kinds of questions and answers. They are (1) to give a direct and clear answer. (2) to analyse the given question in all parts and reply in stages. (3) to reply by a counter-question and (4) to keep silent in reply to a question Deyvacchilaiyār,[124] one of the commentators of Tolkāppiyam (Col. Atikarām) also instances the same four-fold answer. These may be illustrated as follows:[125]

1. *The direct reply:* Suppose a question is put as to whether a thing that appears will also disappear. If the answer is 'it will certainly disappear', then it is a direct and clear-cut answer.

2. *Answer in stages:* Supposing that a question is asked as to whether a dead man will be born again or not, the answer will have to be given in two separate stages or parts. If the dead man is one who has all along led a detached and disinterested life, he will not take a physical body once again. On the other hand, if he is one who has led a life full of ambitions, desires and attachment, then he will certainly be born again.

3. *Reply by Question:* To a question whether the seed or the palmyra tree is the first, the answer will be to ask, in turn, "which particular seed and which particular palmyra tree"? Tolkappiyar[120] also admits such a counter question as a form of reply.

4. *Answer by keeping silent:* If a question is asked as to whether the 'sky-flower' is new or old, silence is the best answer.

In this world all the ills are due to desire, anger and illusion. To put an end to desire, one should understand beyond doubt that all things are impermanent, soul-less and full of dirt and filth and thereby refrain from enjoyment. To give up anger, one should cultivate friendliness, good

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123 XXX. 235 to 237.

124 Tol. Col. Sūtram 13.

125 XXX. 238 to 249.

126 Tol. Col. Sūtram 14.

neighbourliness and compassion. Lastly to give up illusion, one should cultivate the habit of listening to the wise people, meditation and contemplation and realisation in mind. Thus, true knowledge and wisdom will dawn to one's mind.

Maṇimēkalai, the heroine of the epic, thus having heard with rapt attention all the precepts given very graciously by Aravaṇa Aḍigaḷ, the great Buddhist Leader, submitted herself to penance, so that she might, at the end get rid of the bondage of birth.

Conclusions

From the detailed and analytical account given above, certain conclusions may be formed. They are as follows:

(1) According to the Buddhistic ideals and code of conduct, besides men, women also can take to ascetic life, do penance and attain Nirvāṇā, as is amply and clearly substantiated by the heroine of this epic itself.

(2) At the time of this epic, there prevailed in the Tamil country six important religions with institution background and with their intricate philosophical systems,[127] and Pāsupatha and Kāpālā religions had not yet spread then.

(3) The Maṇimēkalai considers the Ajīvika creed and Jainism as simply one system as that of the Jains.[128]

(4) The Yoga system has not been mentioned in this epic. The Yoga is dated the 6th century A.D.[129]

(5) In the Maṇimēkalai, the syllogism is said to have contained five limbs namely Paksha, Hētu, Drishtāntā, Upanaya and Nigamana, and the last two are simply included in the third without separate treatment. But Dignāgā, the author of Nyāyapravēsa, reduced these five to three proving the futility of the last two above named. His syllogism looks like that of Aristotle. So this epic is anterior to Dignāgā,

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127 Maṇi XXVII, Avvai S. Doraisamy Pillai's Commentary, p. 416.

128 Maṇi. in its historicaL setting - p. 55 - Dr. S. Krishnasamy Aiyengar.

129 Ibid. p. 69.

and therefore the Nyāyā. The late Prof. Tirunārāyaṉā Iyengar very elaborately discusses this subject and concludes that the Nyāyā does not precede the Maṇimēkalai in point of time.[130]

(6) Sunya Vada of the Mahayana School is not mentioned in this epic; so this is anterior to Nāgārjuna also.

(7) The way in which the nidhāṉās are distributed under the three times (past, present and future) in this epic is quite repugnant to the Mahayana school of thought. So the Maṇimēkalai treats only of the Hinayana.

In this connection Dr. P.C. Alexander, has observed; 'It is very significant that the author of the Maṇimēkalai does not refer to Mahayanism anywhere in this book.[132] "Taken as a whole, we have enough left to justify our conclusion that the Buddhism the author expounds is not the Mahayana, but distinctly Hinayana."[133]

(8) The Buddhist logic expounded in this epic is a definite and distinct contribution by the Buddhists to the sum-total of the Tamilian knowledge and thought.

(9) Although Buddhism as expounded in this epic has given a fine code of morals, a thoughtful exposition of the logical niceties and philosphical ideas, yet it, as a religion, is conspicuous by its silence over the existence and nature of God.[134]

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130 Sentamiḻ Vol. XXXII No. 2 & 3 pp. 27 & 28, 63 & 64.

131 Maṇimēkalai with Avvai S. Doraisamy Pillai's Commentary, p. 583.

132 Buddhism in Kerala p. 142.

133 Buddhistic Studies Ch. I. P. 11.

134 Ibid.

Chapter IV

CIVILIZATION AND CULTURE AS REFLECTED IN THE MAṆIMĒKALAI

Definition

In ancient Tamil literature, the nearest equivalents that can be traced for the terms 'civilization' and 'culture' are *kaṇṇōṭṭam*[1] and *Pādar̲indoḻukal*[2]. *Kaṇṇōṭṭam* refers to a certain delicacy and refinement of feelings. This quality disables a person from violently disagreeing with his equal in his presence. This is born of a consideration and respect for the individual. Thus, the term implies an essential social sense, considering man as an individual bound by certain obligations to the society to which he belongs. *Pādar̲indoḻukal* refers to the conduct of an individual imbued with a sense of honour and nobility. This implies a knowledge of the nature of fellow-citizens and a certain adaptability of temperament. Now it is clear that both these terms aim at the development of society in a refined manner, by clearly defining the relationship of an individual with society and his obligations to the same. However, civilization is to culture what the body is to the soul, the former dealing more or less with the external relationship of man, considered as an individual, with society, while the latter refers to the internal development of man's personality.

The term *civilization* comes from Latin 'civils', which means 'citizen'.[3] Thus, the word means the necessary

1 Tiru. 580; Nar̲r̲iṇai 355

2 Kali. 133.

3 The Concise Oxford Dictionary of Current English

adjuncts of a town-dweller, a person who lives in a city. Naturally it suggests the ways and means by which town-life is improved upon. This also suggests the proper training of the individual to adapt himself to society.[4] The term 'culture' also comes from Latin 'cultura' and from German 'Kulture'[5] which means the proper tillage of cultivable lands. Thus, it can be seen that civilization and culture refer to the external and internal development of the personality of man respectively, the former dealing with man as an individual in society, and the latter with man as an entity by himself. "These two words, however, are currently used to express the same concept, except that 'culture' is more limited in area and time than 'civilization'."[6] Culture, according to Henry S. Lucas, is a common way in which men live, think and act. It comprises a general adjustment to economic needs or to geographical surroundings, a common organization produced to satisfy social and political needs arising in these surroundings, and a common body of thoughts achievement. This includes art, literature, science inventions, philosophy and religion.[7]

The Epic in Outlines

The Maṇimēkalai is a sequel to the Silappatikāram just as the 'Odesseus' continues the story of the Iliad. Both the epics taken together are styled as the Twin Epics. To put the 'argument' of the Maṇimēkalai in a nutshell, it shows how Maṇimēkalai (the daughter of Kōvalaṉ, a rich merchant of Kāvirippūmpaṭṭiṉam and Mādhavi, an accomplished dancing girl of bewitching beauty) gave up worldly pleasures, becoming a disciple of Aṟavaṇa Aḍigaḷ, a Buddhist teacher, and how she attained supreme knowledge by leading a pure and austere life, by plain living and high thinking and finally, 'shuffled off this mortal coil'[8]. Some of the important events of the epic are as follows:

1. Maṇimēkalai goes to the Flower-garden.

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4 The Concise Oxford Dictionary of Current English

5 A short History of Civilization p. 2 by Henry S. Lucas

6 Ibid p.1.

7 A short History of Civilization p. 2 by Henry S. Lucas

8 Shakespeare's Hamlet.

2. Maṇimēkalai is carried to the island of Maṇipallavam by the goddess Maṇimēkalai where she realises the details of her past birth.

3. Maṇimēkalai receives *Amudhasurabi,* the unfailing bowl and is taught the 'Mantras'.

4. Maṇimēkalai proceeds to Kāvirippūmpaṭṭiṉam to feed the poor.

5. Utayakumaran who loves Maṇimēkalai is murdered by Kāñchaṉaṉ, a dēva and Maṇimēkalai is falsely accused of complicity and imprisoned and later released.

6. Maṇimēkalai proceeds to the land of Āputtiraṉ and takes him to Maṇipallavam where he also knows about his past birth.

7. Maṇimēkalai goes to the city of Vañchi, contacts the various religious teachers and converses with them regarding their creeds and religious doctrines.

8. Maṇimēkalai goes to the city of Kāñchi, becomes a devoted disciple of Aṟavaṇa Aḍigaḷ and prefers Buddhism to other creeds and faiths. Ultimately she realises supreme knowledge.

If we remember these broad outlines of the story, we clearly see the poet's purpose to dramatise a religious information. Moreover, the poet has recourse to these events as a tool to depict the social and religious conditions of his time. A fairly good idea of the society of ancient Tamil Nadu in all its aspects can be had from a study of this epic. The poet tells us of the various rulers and their administration, the customs and manners of the city-dwellers, the temples and the worship of various deities. But the poet's main purpose is to show how Buddhism strove to establish its superiority among the varied and conflicting religious sects and creeds and how it differed from and surpassed the orthodox religious schools of Saivism, Vaishnavism, Brahma Vādā and Veda Vādā. Finally, he waxes eloquent over the Four-fold Truths[9] as expounded by the

9 XXX: 186 to 188.

Buddha and the Five-fold articles of Conduct.[10] Thus the poet's purpose is to set off the excellence of Buddhism by offering, as a foil to it all other religions and creeds.

Cities

It will be seen that the events narrated in the epic begin at Kāvirippūmpaṭṭiṉam, the harbour-city which served as a capital for the ancient Cōḻā kings. Then they are placed at Vañchi, the capital of the ancient Cērās and close at Kāñchi, the later capital of the Pallavas. Thus, we find here a luring of the three important cities of ancient Tamil Nadu. Besides, other foreign countries abroad are also mentioned like Maṇipallavam, Nāganāḍu, Sāvaganāḍu etc. The poet's imagination that links flourishing cities inland with those abroad brings to our mind's eye the glorious civilization, art, and commerce of ancient Tamilnadu. While narrating the story of Aputtiraṉ, the poet says that he had gone to Madurai, the capital of the Pāṇḍyās and had been the happy recipient of 'Amudhasurabi' by the grace of the goddess of learning. Thus, the epic shows at once all the glitter and prosperity of all the important cities.

Kāvirippūmpaṭṭiṉam continued to be the capital since Karikāl Peruvaḷattaṉ's time. The city was interspersed with Palatial mansions beautified with golden towers and intricate patterns and spacious windows.[11] The rich and prosperous citizens lived in those mansions which show at once their aesthetic sense and love of healthy living. Besides, there were also other buildings of brick provided with tall door-frames.[12] The walls of the houses were all whitewashed and they glittered with fine frescoes; the paintings on the walls were all representations of figures from angels down to all sorts of beings. The main roads of the city were broad enough for the king's chariot to pass. They were of varied length and breadth. The streets where the merchants lived spoke volumes for their abundance of wealth with all their glitter and busy barter, while those

10 XXIV: 77 & 78.

11 Maṇi IV: 52 to 54.

12 Maṇi III: 127 to 132.

where the actors and artistes like professional dancers lived, echoed with the music and mellifluous dance recitals in the homes. The streets were now and then filled with the tinkling sound of bells as the adorned chariots passed by. Their gesto in and zeal for happy living is evinced by the fact that they used to sleep on soft beds of flowers.

There were also many *mandaps*[13] in the city where the varied religious teachers assembled to disseminate their knowledge during festival times. There were many temples dedicated to Sambāpathi and Siva. The deities in the various temples are imagined to converse with characters like Maṇimēkalai. Of course this reminds us of the Delphic Oracle in Greek mythology and it serves to excite an element of wonder in us. 'Sadukka Būdham' and 'Kollippāvai' directly intervened whenever anything unrigheous was done and like Nemesis or the Goddess of Retribution, they took revenge upon those who had done wrong. Moreover, we find many other references to 'Vidhyādarās' like Kāyachaṇḍikai and other goddesses play their part in the Epic, experiencing the joys and the sorrows of human life, either sympathising with people, or punishing them. They seem to form part and parcel of the social life of the people. We feel as though we move in a weird, unearthly atmosphere.

Beyond the groves in the suburbs of the city was situated the Chakkaravāḷakōṭṭam[14] or the burial ground where the supernatural beings are said to congregate and the scenes which depict their activities excite terror in us. 'The Paḷikkarai' or the crystal pavilion in the flower garden shows the engineering skill of the ancient Tamils. It must have been more or less "a marble wonder" like the Taj Mahal. The valiant Prince who had brought under control the rogue elephant running amuck, chased Maṇimēkalai to the garden infatuated by her beauty. Sutamati,[15] the wise friend of Maṇimēkalai, let her hide herself in the marble mandap, so that she might escape the vicious clutches of the Prince who came fast in his chariot. We do not know

13 Maṇi 1: 14 to 24.

14 VI: 37 to 202

15 V: 9.

whether to pity the Prince who was puzzled by the mazy, labyrinthine ways of the building or to wonder at the wizard who conceived of such a building.

Kāvirippūmpaṭṭiṉam with all its glories is said to have been swallowed by the upheavals of the sea in Maṇimēkalai's own life-time.[16] Today Kāvirippūmpaṭṭiṉam is just a village with a few hutments here and there and the description in the Epic lends a touch of pathos and romance to the village to the 'city' that is no more.

The next in importance is the city of Kāñchi,[17] which boasted of a fine fortress with impregnable battlements. The moat that surrounded the massy walls of the fortress is described in detail by Sāttaṉār. It had many secret ways and other devices to let out or let in water. The adjoining lakes and tanks were the source of supply for the moat. The tanks presented a colourful appearance on gala days with the young men and women of the city who enjoyed their time in swimming sports. They used to perfume the water and indulge in harmless sports by scattering it on one another by means of country fans (Siviṟi) and 'Kombu'. The many coloured perfumed water finally would flood the moat as a result of which the 'Karām' and the 'Idaṅgar' (crocodiles of various kinds) and the fishes in the moat were deprived of their natural foul smell or flesh. Moreover, with the many coloured flowers of the lotus and the lily and the 'Kaḻunīr' blossoming by day and the 'Āmbal' blossoming by night, all gently rocking on the surface of the perfumed water, the moat looked verily like a rainbow. The massy walls of the castle were provided with strong battlements. With whitewashed walls that glittered in the light, it looked like the outlines of a silver hill all hollow within, or the crescent moon. The banner of the kingdom proudly fluttered at the entrance of the castle. Numberless were the streets and buildings inside the castle. Encompassed within were various artificial hills commanding a fine prospect, beautiful pools, choultries, goldenroofed public buildings and ascetic's abodes enriched with paintings and sculptures.

16 XXVIII. 135.

17 XXVIII. 5-72.

The total impression that we get of the description is one of comfortable life led in luxury. However the city[18] was not entirely free from poor inhabitants who were starving for want of food. The poet points out that the poverty-stricken people of Kāñchi, starved almost to emaciation, gathered in the 'Chakkaravāḷakkōṭṭam' at Kāvirippūmpaṭṭiṉam and that Maṇimēkalai went there to redress them of their grievances with her 'Amudasurabi'.

Festivals

Of all the festivals of the day, the 'Indira Viḻā' or Festival of Indra was the most famous. Chitrapathi, the dancer, details the evils that would a light on society if Indira Viḻā was not celebrated; she threatens that even the "Chadukka Būdam" or the Deity presiding over justice would desert them[19] and the rains would cease to come, if Indira was not worshipped. Indra as is well-known, the Lord of the Dēvās. The *Vēdās* deal with the various *Yāgās* to please him. The Maṇimēkalai contains an interesting reference to Indra. Āputtiraṉ fed the numberless people who rushed to him for food, with the divine gift of 'Amudhasurabi' which supplied food everlastingly. The 'Puṇya' that accrued to him, because of his good deeds that knew no end, was a source of danger to Indra and he felt his throne rocking as a result of it.

Indra immediately rushed to Āputtiraṉ and expressed his readiness to grant any boon of his. The selfless Aputtiraṉ mocked at him saying: "What is there worth receiving from you". Whatever be the notoriety of Indra, he was worshipped by the Tamils as the Deity of arable lands and celebrated festivals in his honour even during the time of the Maṇimēkalai. This shows that the orthodox Vedic religion must have influenced Tamil ways of life hundreds of years before the Maṇimēkalai was written.

The origin of the Indira Viḻā is to be found in the Maṇimēkalai.[20] In days of Yore, Sage Agattiya wanted to relieve Kāvirippūmpaṭṭiṉam of a long-drawn period of water

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18 XVII. 76-82.

19 I. 20 to 24.

20 I. 3 to 7.

famine. He commanded Tūṅgeyileṟinda Toḍittōḷ Cembiyaṉ, the Cōḻa king to worship Indra. He was pleased with the king and gave his consent for a festival to be celebrated in his honour for twenty-eight days. All the descendants of the Cōḻa king followed in his footsteps and celebrated the festival annually. We find that all religious teachers belonging to various sects and schools congregating and passing a resolution, so to say, to the effect, that if 'Indra Viḻā' was given up, 'Nāḷaṅgaḍi Būdham' that relieved Musukundaṉ, would do evil to them, that Sadukka Būdham which killed the sinners and devoured them, would desert them and that therefore they should continue to celebrate it.[21] Accordingly we find them ordering the drummer to proclaim the happy news to the public in the town. The drummer's method of proclamation is described in detail in the Maṇimēkalai.

Like the heralds or official messengers, the drummers had to follow certain conventions. The *Maṇimēkalai* says that the drummer mounted the big drum on the back of the elephant and then began his proclamation with a prologue in the nature of an invocation:[22] "May the rains come thrice every month. May the king never swerve from the path of justice: O wise ones; As the great believe that all the dēvās desert their abode of Heaven to witness the Festival of Indra here let us welcome them all with reverential offerings of 'Puraṇa Kumbam', 'Porpālikai' and 'Pāvaiviḷakku' adorning all the streets of the city. Let there be adornments and festoons in all the proper places, of clusters of 'Kamuku' and plantains, sugarcanes and 'Vañji' creepers and other flower plants. Let the pillars be adorned with pearl garlands; freshen the streets and other public buildings with new sand after removing the old layers. Let the towers, archways and entrances of buildings be festooned: Let all your obligations to the temples of all gods an goddesses beginning from Siva down to the Sadukka Būdham, be carried out: O Righteous Ones, may you hold congregations, and conduct discourses under the 'pandal' or in the 'mandaps', O Religious Teachers, May you hold debates in the neighbourhood of the 'Paṭṭimaṇḍapa' and may you be free from enmity and anger."

21 I. 14 to 31.

22 K. 33 to 72.

Street-Scenes

Sāttanār gives a brief account of the vast concourse, moving up and down the streets of Kāvirippūmpaṭṭinam.[23] We find a medley of all ascetics among the laymen. A fasting Jain ascetic, almost naked, was among them, and the poet incidentally, succeeds in his attempt to arouse disgust at the sight of the Jain. We see by his side a drunkard who went reeling down the street. The fasting ascetic was suffering in a world of his own religious illusions, while the drunkard too was suffering in a tipsy world of illusions. The ensuing address of the drunkard to the ascetic shows the poet's sense of sarcastic humour. "O Ascetic, heed the words of one who always prays to the Lotus-feet of the Lord: You melt in pity for even invisible beings; but your own soul within the confines of your ugly body, suffers intensely as though being cribbed and cabined in a stuffy cell. I offer you a remedy for relieving your sufferings, Drink this fine intoxicant brewed from the rich and juicy coconut palms;" Next we find a lunatic in rags with garlands of 'alari' and 'erukkam' round his neek. Wearing ashes and sandal paste on his body, he raved wildly, now speaking obscene terms, now weeping, now praying and prattling.

Elsewhere there was a crowd witnessing the eunuch's dance where the person made all wild and suggestive gesticulations with a loosely hanging silk garment that reached to the knees. Besides, there were many other foreign traders who mingled with the crowd with all their unintelligible chatter. Thus, it was a scene of wild merriment and noisy bustle.

On such festive occasions, Mādhavi and Maṇimēkalai kept themselves aloof, living quietly in the Buddha Sanga. The other Buddhist priests and laymen who followed Buddhism did not take part in the revels of the people. As enjoined by the Buddha, they knew that the supreme virtue lay in feeding and clothing the poor. The Maṇimēkalai shows that it was better for widows to lead ascetic lives than to commit sati.

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23 III. 96 to 145.

Yāgās and Sacrifices

Some of the kings of Tamil Nadu like (Palyāgasālai) Mudukuḍumip Peruvaḻuthi indulged in Yāgās and consequent sacrifices. The Maṇimēkalai strongly condemns all such practices along with the evil habit of drinking intoxicants like wine and toddy which blunts the reasoning faculty. What Tiruvaḷḷuvar[24] says regarding the latter evil may well be cited here.

> 'To abstain from the killing and eating of
> living beings is better than to perform
> a thousand sacrifices in the fire.'

Sāttaṉār voices his protest against these practices when he narrates the history of Āputtiraṉ.[25]

Thus one of the fundamental tenets of Buddhism appears to be its opposition to meat-eating. Asōkā's rock edicts also are in evidence of this strict vegetarianism. However, there is a particular passage in the Maṇimēkalai which seems to aim at a compromise, so to say, between vegetarianism and non-vegetarianism.

> 'Do not kill other beings for eating.
> But you may eat the flesh of the dead ones'[26]

From this passage it appears that it was not considered wrong to eat the flesh of animals which died a natural death, without being killed for that purpose. Here the moral injunctions given by Tiruvaḷḷuvar[27] may be noted:

> "Not to kill is grace. To kill is lack of
> grace; to eat the meat of the killed animal
> is unworthy".

> 'One should refrain from eating meat.'

Conclusions

Thus, amidst the glitter of the prosperous lives of the people in ancient Tamil Nadu under the Cōḻās, we cannot

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24 Tirukkuṟaḷ 259.
25 XIII. 27 to 33.
26 XVI. 116 & 117.
27 Tirukkuṟaḷ 254 & 257.

fail to note a few stains here and there. We see the starved figures stalking in the midst of pomp and splendour. The general impression is that we find Tamil Nadu in a ferment as reflected in the Maṇimēkalai; there were many forces at work pulling in different directions. The people must have been pretty bewildered by the 'Vaidic' orthodox doctrines, the Jains' extreme injunctions and mortifications, and then Buddhists' love of abstract virtues. The various religionists cried themselves hoarse over disputes and controversies and the art of living cultivated so perfectly in the Sangam period, suffered a deplorable set-back by religious controversies. Of course, even the Sangam period was not entirely free from 'Vaidic or orthodox religious influences, but yet it was unsullied to a large extent, as the people at that time loved more natural and unsophisticated ways of life. The Manimekalai indirectly teaches a certain tolerance that is essential for the development of a happy society. Whatever be the creed or caste of a person it must yet be possible for him to cultivate a large sympathy, and a deep study of the *Maṇimēkalai* enables one to realise this large sympathy of attitude and that is the *message* of the *Maṇimēkalai.*

Chapter V

THE SOCIO-HISTORICAL ASPECTS OF THE MAṆIMĒKALAI

The Maṇimēkalai is essentially an epic poem. As a poem it has all the embellishments and supernatural elements that are indispensable to it. Whatever might be found unreal and unhistorical in the body of this great poem, it does not cease to be a social as well as a historical record. This is so in almost all the works written in the Tamil language in ancient times. The social and the historical data are interspersed with passages of literary excellences and embellishments. For, in the ultimate analysis, any work of art is a social product and hence the inevitability of its being historical too in character, however limited in extent. Literature is an expression of the changing life of the nation that has produced it. For, literature is one side of history; often, indeed, the most instructive side.[1]' Dr. B.R. Mullik has observed; "In fact the range of social influences on literature is as broad as the entire range of operative social forces; the prevailing system of social organization including the class structure, the economic system, the political organization and the deeply rooted institutions, the dominant ideas, the characteristic emotional tone, the sense of the past and the pattern of the future."[2] So, the Maṇimēkalai, a fine literary epic as will be shown in the following chapter of this thesis, is a very good source of the social as well as the historical material.

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1 Some principles of Literary criticism p. 3 - by Prof. C.T. Winchester.

2 Literary essays, Vol. I p. 20.

So far as the ancient Tamil literary production is concerned, sociology and history are the handmaids of literature. Sociology is a study of the history and nature of human society. History, according to Carlyle, is merely nothing but the biographies of great men and it is a record of the people, their varied achievements, avocations and places of worship, and wars and the like recede in the background. Lord Macaulay viewed history as poetry combined with philosophy. Sociology and history are complementary to each other in that the former is the root of the latter, while the latter is the fruit of the former. Having thus viewed, it is now possible to make a probe into the work under study.

The Social Side

The social life of the people as depicted in this work is varied and variegated; we see a very high class of people as the protoganists and custodians of religions, morals and rectitude. We meet with monarchs who stick to the highest code of righteousness and rule of law in the dispensation of justice and the protection of the people especially the oppressed and the depressed. We also come across the simple folk whose harmless pastimes are festivals, sports and listening to the learned debates and discourses. Finally we have what may be called the unsocial elements in society, even among the Royalty, like Utayakumāra̲n who meets with his death in chasing Maṇimēkalai to force her to accept his suit. Broadly speaking the four-fold social division[3] was obtaining in the society of the time. They are Arasar, Antaṇar, Vaṇikar and Vēḷāḷar (the kings, the learned, the merchants and the agriculturists). Ku̲ravar, Iḍaiyar, Paḷḷar and Pa̲raiyar were divisions based on the parts of lands occupied by them. Certain other castes based on their occupations[4] were Kuyavar (the potters). Chembukkoṭṭi, Veṅgalakkaṇṇār (the coppersmiths), Po̲rppa̲ni-seyvor (the goldsmiths), Ūrukkuṭattār, Marattaccar (the carpenters), Maṇṇeeṭṭāḷar (the sculptors), the painter, the tanners, the tailors, the astrologers, the cobblers, etc. Besides these

3 VI. 59.

4 XXVIII. 30 to 45.

people there were 'pāṇars' (the instrumentalists) and 'Kūttiyar' (the dancers). The 'pāṇars' were of three kinds namely the musicians (isaippāṇar), the fiddlists (Yāḻppāṇar) and the beggars (Maṇḍaippāṇar).

Apart from these different artistes there were foreigners also in the important cities of the ancient Tamiḻakam. They sailed high seas to Kāvirippūmpaṭṭiṉam and lived there for trade purposes.[5] They spoke their own tongues. We also hear of people who spoke eighteen different languages[6] probably belonging to different countries. It seems they were freely moving with the Tamils. Some of them who were unfortunately dumb, deaf and lame received alms from Maṇimēkalai at Kāñchi.

In the ancient Tamil society there was a class called 'Kaṇikaiyar' or prostitutes. They were well versed in all the sixty four[7] arts of the day. Chitrāpathy, an old dancer and the grand-mother of Maṇimēkalai, the heroine of this epic, speaks of dancing girls (Kaṇikaiyar) who distinguished themselves in their field of activities at the city of Puhār.[8] While Chitrāpathy, the mother of Mādhavi was proud of being born in the 'Kaṇikai' caste, Mādhavi spoke despicably of the acts of those people. Even in those days prostitution was condemned and it was looked down upon. Mādhavi herself felt it and gave expression to her feeling; when Mādhavi was talking to Vasantamālai, the messenger-lady sent by Chitrāpathy to convince her about the indispensability of the dancing during the Indra festival, she bluntly retorted to the messenger that not only herself but also her daughter Maṇimēkalai would never again take to that sort of a profession. In that connection Mādhavi spoke of Maṇimēkalai as the daughter of that chaste lady Kaṇṇagi[9] and therefore she would not take to the detestable way of life.

But the Buddhist religion did not recognize caste distinctions and the Buddha Sanga treated Māsāttuvaṉ of

5 1. 16 with footnotes by Dr. U. V. Swaminatha Iyer.

6 XXVIII. 221.

7 II. 18 to 32.

8 XXIV. 8 to 15.

9 II. 55.

the merchant class on a par with Mādhavi, who was the daughter of a dancer, in so far as both were lovers of virtue. In those days, some important people who were very helpful to the Royalty were honoured publicly with surnames and titles. The merchant community was considered to be the back-bone of the society and they rose in importance next only to the kings. Such of the merchants who helped the kings in their governance were given the title 'Eṭṭi'[10]. 'Kāviti'[11] was also another such title given to the same community. The commanding officers of the army and the ministers were also honoured by the kings with such titles as 'Ēṉāti'. The phrase *Cōḻika Ēṉāti* in the Maṇimēkalai[12] means a (title) given by the Cōḻā king. As a token of this title being conferred on a person, a ring used to be worn by him.

Another important social characteristic of the day is mentioned in this epic. In those days it was customary on the part of the royal families to feel disgraceful if a prince had to die a natural death due to old age. There is definite reference[13] in the Maṇimēkalai to Utayakumāraṉ who died untimely being slain by a Vidhyādarā with his sword. On hearing the brutal murder of her son Utaya kumāraṉ, the queen became terribly upset and plunged into deep sorrow. When the king sent an old woman by name Vasantavai to the queen to console her, the queen lamented the disgraceful way in which her son had to die. As custom would have it, every prince born in the Cōḻā royal family must die on the battle front either in defending his mother-land or in conquering the enemy's land. If, on the other hand, he should die a natural death, either due to disease or due to old age, his body should be caused to be cut by a Brahmin with a sword and then only buried or cremated as the case may be. It was due to the belief that those who fell in the battle-field would directly reach the heaven of the heroes. This reminds us of the Norse mythology wherein we find those who die a natural death

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10 IV. 58.

11 Ibid. Dr. U.V. Swaminatha Iyer's foot-notes.

12 XXII. 205 with foot-notes by Dr. U.V. Swaminatha Iyer.

13 XXII. 11 to 16.

being condemned to death and only those who die in the battle-field feast with the gods in Valhālla.

The Historical side

Before we proceed to analyse the historical data found scattered in the body of the work, it will be very useful to assess as to how far the story contained in this book is historical in character. On the face of it, the Maṇimēkalai will seem to be unhistorical to a casual reader. For, in the first place, this book is meant primarily to glorify Buddhism and so it is full of tales. Secondly, the author indulges in introducing the supernatural machinery which makes one doubt its historicity. These charges may be easily met. As regards the first, any history of Buddhism will necessarily be evolved in stories. "No incident of Buddhist history is described in any work of Buddhist history without reference to some tale or other dealing with the anterior births of the Buddha or some other saint of the Buddhist hierarchy. The introduction of the miraculous is, therefore, of the essential equipment even of Buddhist history".[14] So, this is no real handicap in our way of viewing this work as historical.

As regards the second one, any poetical work born of the genius of a creative artist will be rich in imagination. Even if the author draws supernatural beings and the miraculous element to his work, he has never failed to approximate the remote and to familiarise the wonderful, and the miraculous. This common use of a poetical device need not deter us from considering it as a historical one. As for the rest of the book, it is a simple account of a young lady's life of renunciation on embracing Buddhism. In this connection the following observation of Dr. S. Krishnasamy Aiyengar may be cited with profit; "The author has to deal with the Chola and the Chera country and the town of Kāñchi in the course of the poem. The companion work leaves out Kāñchi and takes instead Madura and Pandyan country. Why should the poets do this? As was already indicated, the poets do this either because they take up a subject which is of a historical character and the incidents connected with the subject have reference to

14 Buddhistic Studies Ch. I. p. 10 by Dr. B.C. Law.

these places with a design to say something regarding them and their rulers by way of compliment."[15] For those reasons, we may assume that the Maṇimēkalai is historical in character, barring of course a few references to the legendary personages introduced in this work.

The legendary kings

At least four of the Cōḻā kings mentioned in this work appear to be legendary figures in as much as their exploits seem to be very extraordinary. The first is one *Tūṅgeyil-eṟinta-Toḍittōḷ-Cembiaṉ*[16] of whom we have already heard as the person responsible for starting the festival of Indra in Kāvirippūmpaṭṭiṉam according to the mandate given by the sage Agastiya. The mention of his personally requesting Indra to grace the celebrations with his presence and of Indra's granting the request by going over to Kāvirippūmpaṭṭiṉam with all his retinue almost deserting the 'Dēva Lōga' for the time being is a fine piece of legendary conception. This king is also said to have destroyed the aerial fortresses of his enemy who goes unnamed, from which exploit he derives his appellation that has come to stay in the place of his real name. The second legendary figure is *Musukundaṉ*[17] who is said to have been blighted in his eye and mind by a 'weapon of darkness' aimed at him by the Asurās with whom he had an encounter. Fortunately for him, a demi-god known as Nāḷaṅgāḍi Būdham, the bazaar deity came to his rescue and cured him of this blight. This king was the descendant of the line of the sun (Sūryakulam) like other Cōḻās and ruled the Cōḻā country having his royal seat at Kāvirippūmpaṭṭiṉam.

Another legendary personage is one *Kāntaṉ or Kāntamaṉ*[18] at whose request Agastya caused the water in his holy vessel flow across the Cōḻā country as the river Cauvery. When Parasurama came to wage a war with him, he escaped in disguise, leaving his kingdom to be governed by his illegitimate son *Kagandaṉ* who would not be touched by Parasurama, as he was not of pure royal descent. This

15 Maṇimēkalai in its historical setting pp. 13 to 14.

16 I. 4.

17 I. 19 with foot-notes (Dr. U.V.S. Iyer's Edition).

18 XXII. 25 to 38.

Kagandan is reported to be an upholder of strict chastity in women, which when violated by his sons, he could not tolerate, and therefore killed them mercilessly. The Cōḻā capital got an alternative name as *Kāgandi* after him.

The Royal Houses

Then, we have references in this work to the three royal houses namely the Cērās, Cōḻās, and the Pāṇḍyās. The story in the Maṇimēkalai extends to all the three capitals of the ancient Tamiḻakam namely Puhār (Kāvirppūmpaṭṭiṉam). Vāñchi and Madurai in addition to Kāñchi, a vice-royalty under the great Cōḻās. The story begins at Puhār, and at the outset we hear about one of the greatest kings of the Cōḻā dynasty known to recorded history. He was no other than the great *Karikāla* or *Karikāl Peruvaḷattāṉ* or *Karikālvaḷavaṉ*.[19] He was the son of *Uruvappalter-Īḷanchēṭ-chenni*[20]. He is said to have been a prodigy and an astounding victor over the Northern kings. It is generally accepted that he had greatly improved and beautified the city of Puhār. He seems to have completely identified himself with his subjects and won the confidence and goodwill of the people at large. So much so, he has been immortalised in a simile by the author. During the festival of Indra at Puhār, it was believed that the Dēvās 'en masse' would go over to Puhār, and the Dēva Lōga would put up a deserted look. This is compared to the city of Puhār, when the great victor Karikālaṉ left the city on expedition to the North. Because, almost all the citizens followed him to a certain distance with a view to giving him a tumultuous send off.

The Silappathikāram, a companion work, speaks of his expedition to and the victorious return from the North. He brought with him as tributaries or mementos four preceious things, a canopy from the king of Vajra Nāḍu, a replica of a debating hall from the king of Mahadha, an ornamental gateway from the king of Avanti, and a mandap of Māyā wrought in gold and diamonds. He also imprinted his insignia, the tiger emblem, on the crest of the Himalayas as a mark of his victory. He was also a great benefactor

19 I. 39; IV; 107 to 108.

20 Porunar. 130.

21 Silap. V. 90 to 108.

and carried out several welfare projects. His name had been recorded in writing history beyond doubt. He was a little anterior in point of time to the period of the story contained in this epic.

The other Cōḻā king of repute mentioned here is *Kiḷḷivaḷavaṉ.*[22] the contemporary of the heroine of this epic. He has also been variously called as *Neḍumuḏikkiḷḷi,*[23] *Māvaṇkiḷḷi,*[24] *Vaḍivēlkiḷḷi,*[25] *Velvēlkiḷḷi,*[26] etc. All these varying attributes indicate some feature or other of prosperity or valour and all of them denote one and the same king. He is also credited with having defeated the Cērā and the Pāṇḍya kings at a place called *Kārivāṟu,*[27] with the help of Iḷamkiḷḷi, the viceroy at Kāñchi under his hegemony. In this connection it is to be noted that land-hunger or territorial ambition[28] was the chief cause of his enemies waging was with him. This is also corroborated by a stanza[29] in the Puṟanāṉūṟu. One day, it is said, Kiḷḷivaḷavaṉ chanced to meet a beautiful damsel by name Pīlivaḷai[30] in his gardens at the estuary, and falling in love with her almost at first sight, spent a month with her. One day, she, all of a sudden, not informing anybody, deserted him and left the place not to return. The king was sorrow-stricken at her sudden disappearance. In spite of being warned by a sage in advance not to forget to celebrate the Indra festival, he was so lost in sorrow, not only at her disappearance, but also at the reported death of a son born to him by that damsel, that he forgot to order for the celebrations. And that was the reason, it is said, for the destruction of Puhār[31] by the wrath of the goddess Maṇimēkalai. It is here only that the author brings in the supernatural. And it is only after the destruction of Puhār, the Cōḻās shifted their capital of Uṟaiyūr.

22 Mani XXV. 14
23 XXIV. 29
24 XIX: 127
25 XXV. 193
26 XXIX. 3
27 XIX. 120 to 127
28 Ibid. 119
29 Puram. 8
30 XXIV. 55 to 61; XXIX: 4 & 5
31 XXV. 176 to 199

Utayakumaran̲ was the son of Māvaṇkiḷḷi, who is also spoken of in this epic. He was the suitor to Maṇimēkalai who disregarded him. Finding him determined to get her by any means for his spouse, she changed her form into that of one Kāyasaṇḍigai, a Vidyādharā maiden, to escape from his clutches. Utayakumaran̲ was in the end murdered by the husband of Kāyasaṇḍigai. Then we hear of Iḷam-kiḷḷi who was the brother of Neḍumuḍikkiḷḷi and who ruled a portion of the Cōḻā country with his seat at Kāñchi. He was mainly responsible for the victory at Kāriyāṟu referred to above. He seems to have great regard for the Buddhists.

Maṇimēkalai, after hearing the different heretical systems at Vañchi, flew to Kāñchi where Iḷamkiḷḷi was acting as viceroy. She was told at Vañchi that there was a severe famine at Kāñchi and she, therefore, thought that her inexhaustible bowl would be of great use there. On arrival at Kānchi, Maṇimēkalai was received by the viceroy Iḷamkiḷḷi. He provided her with all amenities for her stay in the city and did all that she wanted. She got a Buddha seat installed there with the help of the viceroy.

Next we find references made about Madurai and the Pāṇḍyā country which was ruled by Poṟṟēr Seḻiyōn̲[32] or the king of the beautiful car. A reference is here made to *Koṟkai*,[33] a coastal town of the Pāṇḍyan̲ kingdom. This king is considered to be the one who succeeded the ruler of Madurai who committed the greatest blunder of executing Kōvalan̲. Madurai is referred to in this work as Takkaṇa Madurai or South Madurai. There was a temple for the Goddess of Learning. It was here in this temple Āputtiran̲, having been driven out of Puhār by his Brahmin parents, stayed and got the famous inexhaustible bowl or Amudhasurabi, with the help of which he assuaged the hunger of the destitutes that thronged to him in their hundreds. Only such scanty references are found regarding the Pāṇḍyā country.[34]

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32 XIII. 84.

33 Ibid.

34 Ibid. 105.

Next we hear about the famous Cērā kings. *Cēran Seṅguṭṭuvan* and *Imayavaramban Neḍumcēralātan* are the two powerful Cērā kings referred to in this epic. He was noted for his benevolence and righteousness[35]. Once he went on an expedition[36] with his fourfold army. His army that marched on towards the North consisted of elephantry, cavalry, the chariots and the infantry. The well trained elephants were so numerous that the whole expanse of land looked like a mountainous region. The horses, the chariots and the other fighting men marched in such ecstasy that they produced a thunderous ovation. With such a large army Seṅguṭṭuvan crossed the Ganges and in an encounter with the Northern kings, he inflicted a crushing defeat on Kanagan and Vijayan. Afterwards he reached the Himalayas and got a stone there for the idol of Kaṇṇagi, and put it on the heads of those vanquished kings. Thus he extended his name and fame throughout the length and breadth of the country.

Another Cērā king mentioned here was *Kuḍakkō cēralan*[37]. He was also called Imayavaramban, as he went up to the Himalayas and imprinted his insignia on its peaks. He was the father of Seṅguṭṭuvan. He also vanquished a number of Northern kings. It was during the period of these two powerful kings, Cērā Nāḍu was at its zenith of prosperity and valour.

Before we conclude the study of the historical references in the Maṇimēkalai, a note on the usage of the phrase 'Kuccharakuḍikai'[38] in this work is of great importance. 'Kuḍikai' simply means a small tent. 'Kucchara' is taken to be the Tamil equivalent of the Sanskrit word 'Gūrjarā' or of the Kannada word 'Gujjaram', which, according to some scholars,[39] means either a country or the people belonging

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35 XXVI. 77.

36 Ibid. 78 to 90.

37 XXVIII 103

38 XVIII. 145 & 152 with Dr. U.V.S. Iyer's foot notes.

39 Dr. U.V.S. Iyer and Prof. S. Vaiyapuri Pillai in foot notes and 'Kāviya Kālam' p. 135 respectively.

to that country. This word has been considered by them as a historical evidence to fix the date of this epic. The Gūrjarās were noted for their sculptural and architectural beauties. They are said to have come to India only in the beginning of the sixth century A.D. But the difficulty arises regarding the interpretation of 'Kucchara' as "Gūrjarā'. If it is so, the author mentions in another place, were actually engaged in building the hall in the royal gardens in Puhār, the capital city of the Cōḻās. The other artisans[40] referred to in this work belonged to Mahadha, Mahratta, Avanti and Yavaṉa Dēsā. So the interpretation becomes doubtful and cannot be conclusively taken to be a proof for the fixation of the age of this epic. To conclude this chapter, a note on the administration that obtained at that time is essentially necessary.

Administration

Monarchy was the only form of government prevailing in ancient Tamil Nadu. Māvaṇkiḷḷi, as we have already seen was the king ruling over the vast area of the Cōḻā country. He was the father of the unfortunate prince Utayakumāraṉ who loved Maṇimēkalai intensely and was murdered. Māvaṇkiḷḷi was a noble and just ruler, noted for his sense of honour and integrity. When he heard that Maṇimēkalai, in the form Kāyasaṇḍigai, fed all the prisoners, he sent for her and came to know of the virtues of Amudhasurabi. Maṇimēkalai then brought about a change of heart in him, and according to her wishes, he began treating the prisoners in a benevolent manner and converted the prison into a charity home[41]. This humane and generous gesture on the part of the king shows his concern for the welfare of his subjects, and his readiness to welcome any reforms for the good of all.

Above all, his sense of justice is amazing. When he heard that his son was murdered for his passionate love of Maṇimēkalai, he exclaimed that the murderer Kāñchaṉaṉ was an ignoble man, in so far as he had not allowed the

40 XIX. 107 to 109.

41 XIX. 161 to 162.

king to mete out justice and punish the wrong-doer. In other words, he did not express his sorrow for the death of his son, but felt indignant that Kāñchaṉaṉ had deprived him of the opportunity of trying his own son and bringing him to justice.[42] This did not show lack of feeling; on the other hand, it shows a keen sense of justice that should rule out all personal considerations.

The king never allowed himself to become a despot. He cared for public opinion and the wise counsels of his advisers. This can be seen from the fact that in all important matters, the king used to consult the council of the Five and that of the Eight.[43] The council of the Five or *Aimperum Kuḻu*, consisting of ministers, priests, commanders of the army, ambassadors or emissaries and roving spies, and the council of the Eight or *Eṇpērāyam* consisting of accountants, officers, high-placed relatives, sentinels, people's representatives, infantry chiefs, elephantry chiefs, and cavalry chiefs. Evidently it was a very broad-based system of monarchical form of government with due representation to every department of state activity. Even on the festive occasions like the Indra festival these councils had a place and surrounded the king as his inseparable paraphernalia.

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42 XXII. 206 & 207.

43 I. 17.

Chapter VI

EPIC QUALITIES IN THE MAṆIMĒKALAI

Definition and classification of Epic

An epic may be defined as a narrative poem written in a *lofty style* and describing the *exploits of a hero.* It is distinguished from a drama so far as the author is frequently the speaker or narrator: it differs from a lyric by being a narration of *action* and not the expression of emotion-the predominant feature in a lyric. Every nation has its early history-the history of its struggle for existence against nature and hostile tribes-covered in myths which in course of time take concrete form as *heroic* poetry. The myths are gathered together and welded into the form of a complete poem by some compiler and the result is an *Epic.* It was the genius of the great Epic poet Homer that raised the heroic sagas (tales) of Greece to the dignity of works of art- 'the Iliad', and the 'Odyssey'. Such epics are called *national Epics,* since they glorify their heroes and through them the nation to which they belong.

There is another kind of Epic called *literary Epic.* The literary epic is not concerned with the country or the nationality of the hero. It is a conscious imitation of the example of classical epic poets and so it is a work of art. Aristotle, the father of literary criticism formulates his rules for epic poetry from 'the Iliad', and 'the Odyssey'. According to him, an Epic must have one single story, though there may be some episodes necessary for the proper understanding of the story. Also these episodes are essential to give the poem a *vastness of scope.* Professor Lascelles Abercrombie discussing the nature of the Epic concludes:

These works take us into a region in which nothing happens without deep significance and purpose. The epic poetry must be an affair of evident largeness. It must have supernatural machinery'[1].

In this connection, it will not be out of place to mention some of the ideas of W.P. Ker regarding the epic. He says: 'Many nations instead of an Iliad or an Odyssey have had to make-shift with conventional repetitions of the praise of chieftains without any story; many have had to accept from their story-tellers all sorts of monstrous adventures in place of the humanities of debate and argument. Epic literature is not common; it is brought to perfection by a slow process through many generations.'[2] Considering this, it is clear that rules for the epic in respect of the story part of it have undergone considerable changes during the mediaeval times.

Epic conventions

According to the Greek conception of Epic, the following conventions[3] should be adhered to:

1. The adventures of a hero (usually a national hero) as the theme,
2. Invocation to the Muse (Goddess of Poetry),
3. The beginning *'in medias res'* (in the middle) plus recapitulation of earliest events.
4. Stereotyped epithets
5. Epic similes
6. Extensive use of monologues
7. Gods' intervention in human affairs and
8. Grand style.

These are the Greek as well as the western concepts of an Epic.

1 The Epic pp. 40 to 55.

2 Epic and Romance p. 13.

3 World Literature Vol. I p. 45 by Buckner B. Trawick.

The Tamil Conception

The term Kāppiyam is Tamil in origin. It is not a derivative from the Sanskrit term 'Kāvya'. 'Kāppu' is to protect or to contain, and what does it contain? It contains certain essentials that go to make a particular work of art. The word 'Kāppiyam' is not found in the Tolkāppiyam. But we should not hasten to conclude, on that account, that the Tamils had no 'Kāppiyās' (Epics) during or before the tome of Tolkāppiyam. Some of the sutrams in the Tolkāppiam may be construed to contain certain characteristics of a 'Kāppiyam' or epic. A work of art according to the Tolkāppiyam, should contain eight-fold beauty (Va<u>n</u>appu) in itself. Of these eight beauties or characteristics, five[4] namely To<u>n</u>mai, Tol, Virundhu, Iyaipu and Pula<u>n</u> may be considered to conform to the requirements of an epic. The last one 'Pula<u>n</u>' relates to the dramatic works and the other four belong to the epics.

1. *To<u>n</u>mai* refers to a poetical work of art that is based on an old story with prose interspersed.

2. *Tol* refers to a poetical work in Āsiriya or Kali metre. It is composed in mellifluous and sweet words, usually in a lengthy form.

3. *Virundhu* refers to a work which is based on a current and original story. It is also a lengthy one.

4. *Iyaipu* refers to a poetical work having continuity and unity of action and it will end with one of the eleven consonants (five nasals excluding '<u>n</u>' and six medials). Pērāsiriyar, one of the commentators, instances the *Maṇimēkalai* as one that ends with '<u>n</u>'.

5. *Pula<u>n</u>* concerns only a dramatic work. From a close study of the above, it may be inferred that 'in all civilisations the composition of epics has all along been in vogue and that custom had been prevalent in Tamilnad even before Tolkāppiyar, for otherwise, he would not have formulated such rules concerning this sort of a poetical work'.[5]

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4 Tol. Seyyul: Sūtras: 237 to 241 with 'the Pērāsiriyam'.

5 Tami<u>l</u>k Kāppiyaṅgaḷ p. 80 by K.V. Jegannathan.

In the *Dhandi*, a later Tamil work on poetics, elaborate rules are prescribed for an epic or *'Peruṅkāppiyam'* or *Mahākāvya*. Those rules are as follows:[6]

1. *Preface:* Invocation, prayer, and announcement of the subject matter, one of these should be mentioned.

2. *Aim or Purushārthas:* Virtue (Aṟam), Wealth (Poruḷ), Pleasure (Inbam) and Release (Viḍu) must be stressed.

3. *The theme:* Concerning an undisputed hero or heroine - his or her inner and outer life.

4. *Description:* Mountains, Seas, Countries, Cities, Seasons, Sun-rise and Moon-rise.

5. *Composition:* The work should be dealt with in sections or divisions or chapters, evidently leading to its size of largeness.

6. *Similies :* The eight-fold 'rasas' or 'meyppāḍu' and other qualities.

From what has been given above, it is clear that an epic must have a story containing the life's events of a hero. Professor Lascellas Abercrombie says,[7] 'In an epic there is a story told, and well told'. Also it must begin with an invocation or prayer which corresponds to the Greek conception. The quality of largeness, descriptions and similies are the other characteristics that are mentioned here. These apart, the epic, according to the Dhandi, should have grandeur of the subject and grandeur of thought.

Professor S. Vaiyapuripillai, while examining the various requirements of an epic mentioned in the Dhandi, has observed: 'The subject matter is the very live-nerve of an epic. The prayer in the preface and the four objects of existence namely Aṟam, Poruḷ, Inbam and Viḍu (Dharma, Artha, Kāma and Mōksha) are common to all Tamil works. The qualities of the epic have not been mentioned in it'[8]. For these reasons he concludes that the Dhandi has not given the real requirements of an epic. But, apart from the

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6 Dhandi Sūtram 8.

7 The epic p. 40.

8 Kāviya Kālam pp. 262 to 268.

omissions pointed out by the learned Professor, it may be only proper to say that the Dhandi has mentioned certain of the necessary characteristics that go to make an epic.

Now combining the various points of view regarding the constituents of an epic, we have fairly a good basis and a norm on which the epic qualities of the Manimekalai may be discussed and a judicious judgement arrived at.

Literary Epic

The Maṇimēkalai may be considered to be a literary epic as against the national epic. For, it does not give us an account of the heroic deeds on a vast scale. Further, if it should be a national epic, it must have grown out of popular songs and ballads about national heroes and their particular achievements. The Maṇimēkalai is not like the Rāmāyaṇā or the Mahābhāratā that are national epics, but it corresponds to Dante's 'Divine Comedy' and Milton's 'Paradise Lost' that are literary epics. These literary epics generally show a better artistic unity than the earliest epics (national epics) and reflect the distinctive personality of the poets, their authors.

The Story

An epic is a fine story-poem. The Maṇimēkalai is no doubt a fine poem. But considering the story element in the work, we cannot dub it an epic in the fullest sense of the term. For, as we have already seen, an epic must have one "theme of heroic action". The Maṇimēkalai, on the face of it, does not deal with the life of the heroine in its entirety, 'beginning with the parentage and birth of the heroine and tracing her life through all the stages to the threshold of the life hereafter'.[9] The main story in the Maṇimēkalai is the *'Renunciation of Maṇimēkalai'*, for the poem is called by another name *'Maṇimevkalai Tuṟavu'*[10]. So, only that part of Maṇimēkalai's life' that refers to here renunciation of worldly pursuits, has been adequately described in this work. The main inducement for Maṇimēkalai's renunciation was

9 Maṇimēkalai in its historical setting ch. I p. 1.

10 Maṇimēkalai Patikam p. 97.

11 II. pp. 54 to 71.

the momentous decision taken by Mādhavi, her mother, to renounce the worldly pleasures on hearing about the brutal murder of her lover Kōvalan at Madurai and the subsequent hardships that Kaṇṇagi had to suffer. This fact[11] has been mentioned at the very beginning of this work which is the real beginning of Maṇimēkalai's life of renunciation. From this moment of decision to the end when she undertakes peanance after hearing Aravaṇa Aḍigaḷ, all the details are given in this work. So it may be said, the story of Maṇimēkalai, so far as it pertains to her renunciation, is simple and entire. The subsidiary stories of Sutamati, Dīvatilagai, Āputtiran etc. are episodes which are artistically interwoven, so that every part of it so happily merges with the whole namely the main story. This 'architectonic' of the poet is not only superb, but also it easily buds itself to a vastness of scope. The various sub-stories are interesting in themselves and act as welcome diversions for an otherwise dull stale subject-matter of this work. In this, Sāttanār, as an epic poet, 'is the rarest kind of artist.'[12]

Epic Conventions

Regarding invocation, starting the subject in the middle and announcing the subject, the Maṇimēkalai does not satisfy the requirements of an epic of the western type. In this respect the Silappatikāram is comparatively a better specimen, for it announces the subject matter[13] of the epic in its prologue and invokes the gods of nature[14] namely the moon, the sun, etc. With regard to starting the subject *'in medias res'*, almost all the Tamil epics deviate from the western poets and begin their narration from the birth, childhood or marriage, of the hero or heroine as the case may be.

Similies and Descriptions

Following the epic conventions, Sāttanār introduces similies. He is fond of the so-called Homeric similies or long-tailed similies. Such similies are used more often for ennobing than illustrating his point. These similies, serve as ornament

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12 The epic p. 41 - by L. Abercrombie.

13 Silap. prologue 11.

14 Ibid I. 1 & 2 stanzas.

to the poem which otherwise would remain matter-of-fact and prosaic. His similies reveal the vast learning and worldly knowledge. The following simile[15] is a very good example that corresponds to the Homeric or Miltonic[16] similie:

"Kodikkō sāmbik kōmaka n̲ākiya
Vadittēr tān̲ai Vattavan̲ tan̲n̲ai
Vañcam ceytuḷi vāntaḷai vidiya
Uñcaiyil tōn̲r̲iya Yūgi antaṇan̲
Uruvuk Kovvā urunōy Kaṇḍu
Parivuru makkaḷin̲ tampari veyti."

(In order to release Utayaṇan̲ (yāttavan̲), the king of Kōsāmbi, the capital decorated and festooned, who was imprisoned at Ujjain (Uñjai), Yūgi, his Brahmin minister appeared at Ujjain in a despicable form. Seeing his pitiable nature unbecoming of a minister, the people surrounded him and pitied him.)

'In chapter XV of this epic, Maṇimēkalai, the heroine, arrayed herself in the garb of a mendicant, took up the 'Amudhaṣurabi' and went into the street. When she did so, she was mobbed by children and vagabonds. This position of hers is compared to that of Yūgi, who assumed another form at the city of Ujjain'. It is enough if the simile stops here. But the poet proceeds further to talk of Yūgi as the minister of Utayaṇan̲ who was the ruler of 'Kōsāmbi' which was decorated with festoons and flags and where Prachōdhan̲a, the king of Ujjain, caught hold of Utayaṇan̲, his enemy, by foul means and imprisoned him. In order to get his king released, Yūgi, Utayaṇan̲'s minister assumed the form of an eccentric leper and while wandering in the streets of Ujjain, the people surrounded him like the children and the vagabonds who surrounded Maṇimēkalai in the garb of a mendicant. This is a long drawn-out simile that is an essential requirement of an epic. Such long-tailed similies[17] abound in the Maṇimēkalai. Similies apart, there are various descriptions that are given in the subsequent section in this book which grip our attention.

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15 Maṇi. XV. 61 to 66

16 Paradise Lost Book I. 11. 195 to 2008

17 Maṇi. IV. 28 to 34

The Machinery

Epic poets resort to the use of machinery or supernatural elements to solve a difficulty[18] or perform some exploit which exceeds super-human beings. It may also signify angels like the goddess Maṇimēkalai and demons and the like. The machinery of Milton's "Paradise Lost" consists of numerous superhuman personages. He had undertaken to present, not the world of human experience, but a supernatural world, peopled by supernatural beings. Similarly, the Maṇimēkalai also consists of a number of supernatural beings. The intervention of the goddess Maṇimēkalai in the love-affair of Utayakumāraṉ and Maṇimēkalai, the appearance of Dīvatilakai in the Maṇipallavam Island, and the three 'Mantrās' given by the goddess Maṇimēkalai and the like are all supernatural in character which lends to this work a sense of sublimity as against the ridiculous that often finds expression in a work wherein only actual human experiences are depicted. So, in this respect also the Maṇimēkalai is an epic.

The Grand Style

'Style consists in adding to a given thought all the circumstances calculated to produce the whole effect that the thought ought to produce?[19] The grand style is usually and popularly known as the Miltonic style. This grandeur of style is achieved in three things.[20]

1. The use of slightly unfamiliar words and constructions.

2. The use of proper names not solely for their sounds, but because they are the names of splendid, remote, terrible, voluptuous or celebrated things, with romantic or classical significance.

3. Continued allusion to all the sources of the heightened interest in our sense-experience.

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18 Kalaikkathir November 1955 Malar 7. Itaḻ. 11 p. 3.

19 The Problem of Style p. 3 by J. Middleton Murry.

20 A preface to Paradise Lost p. 39 by C.S. Lewis.

With regard to the use of slightly unfamiliar words the following instance may be cited from the Maṇimēkalai: when Sutamati saw Utayakumaran in the flower garden in search of Maṇimēkalai, she explained to him the futility of human body and external beauty. At that time Sattanar uses the phrase, 'puramarippārāy'. That is to say that the human body, however beautiful externally, will be detestable if the entrails come out. This usuage is slightly unfamiliar. In chapter IX of this book, the author uses a consecutive series of proper names[21] like 'Asōtharam', "Iravivanman', 'Amudhapathy', 'Attipathy', 'Sittipuram', 'Sītaran', 'Nīḷapathy', 'Irāgulan', etc.:

"Aravak Kadaloli *Asōdharam* ālum
Iravi Vanman oruperum dēvi
Alattakac Ciradi *Amudha pathy* vayirru
Ilakkumi ennum peyarperrup pirantēn
Atti pathy ennum arasan perumdēvi
Sittipuram āḷum *Sītaran* tirumagaḷ
Nīl pathy enum nēriḷai vayirril
Kālai gñāyirruk Katirpōl tonrya
Irāgulan tanakku..............."

(I was born of Amudhapathy, the wife of Iravi Vanman who ruled at Asōdhara which was noisy like the boisterous sea. My name was Ilakkumi then. Afterwards I became the wife of Irāgulan, the son of Nīlapathy who was the daughter of Sītaran of Sittipuram and the wife of the king Attipathy). The proper names found in the above lines not only have a grandeur of their own as mere sounds, but also they are in themselves splendid because of their rich associations that add to the dignity of style.

Finally, allusions are not wanting in this book. They are historical and socio-religious in nature. Sutamati addresses Utayakumāran alluding to Karikāl-Peruvaḷattān[22] who in his youth in the guise of an old man settled the dispute and established justice. Allusion is also made to Lord Muruga who conquered the 'Kravuñja' mountain[23]. And

21 Maṇi. IX. 38 to 46.

22 Maṇi. IV. 107 to 108.

23 Ibid. V. 13 to 14.

Indra's infatuation with Akalyā[24] and the consequence thereof are also alluded to in this work. So, considering all that has been said above in the Maṇimēkalai, though wanting in certain epic conventions, fulfils, by and large, the requirements of an epic. Although Sāttaṉār's real object in composing this poem is to represent Buddhism as superior to all other religions and creeds," our admiration soars high for the author when he presents a vast world of men, women, supernatural beings, gods and goddesses, in the rarefied atmosphere of a grand epic, almost Miltonic in conception and execution.

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24 Maṇi. XVIII. 90 & 91.

Chapter VII

EPISODES IN THE MAṆIMĒKALAI

Two features of the Maṇimēkalai become dominant when we analyse the structure of this great Epic. First, the story of Maṇimēkalai is developed rather slowly and intermittantly. Secondly, we find plenty of other episodes interspersed in the epic and we find a certain uniformity in the device adopted by the poet in narrating the episodes. Every character who meets the heroine gives a part of his or her story and leaves her saying that the rest of the story is to be heard from some one else. Thus, the narrative becomes interesting, for it arouses our suspense, invested as it is with a dramatic element. It must also be noted that the varied episodes are all connected one way or another, and represented as branching off from a main story. Thus the story of Maṇimēkalai is endowed with a glitter which it otherwise lacks, for the story element is rather weak when we consider the main narrative dealing with Maṇimēkalai. Her story, to say the least, is prosaic and uninteresting, but it forms the core, so to say, which is beautified with the romantic and interesting episodes throwing a halo around it. Moreover, the Maṇimēkalai is the first epic written in Tamil interspersed with sub-stories or episodes as such. The other literary works of the Sangam period which appeared before the Maṇimēkalai were at best compilations of separate poems which lack unity as a whole. The Silappatikāram is entirely devoted to the hero and the heroine and therefore their interminable life histories exclude the possibility of sub-stories in the epic devoted to them. Kōvala<u>n</u> or Kaṇṇaki or both monopolies almost all the pages

of the Silapatikāram. But the narrative of Maṇimēkalai's life is such that the poet finds it difficult to confine himself entirely to it. Even while she is young. Maṇimēkalai abandons worldly pursuits and all the events in the epic cannot therefore necessarily cling to her; if the poet would have ventured to do so, the epic would be lacking variety. The Silappatikaram presents the conjugal love of Kovalan and his carnal pleasures in the company of Madhavi. Manimekalai's life cannot offer anything equal to it, either in romantic appeal or tragic sublimity. Naturally the poet who thought of writing the epic with such an uninteresting figure, was forced to go in "for pastures new" to bring out a full-fledged epic with Maṇimēkalai as the heroine. It is a challenge which the poet takes up and no doubt he has made the best of the dull story of an ascetic. An intense contemplation of Maṇimēkalai's life must have set the poet thinking; it must have given rise to various questions in his mind. He must have asked himself many a time, "What is it that must have impelled Maṇimēkalai to give up worldly pleasures at the prime of her youth? What is it that forced Utayakumāraṉ to love her in the Uvavaṉam though she was an ascetic? What is it that made her also inclined towards him for a while? How is it that she was born as the daughter of the dancer, Mādhavi and how is it she made friends with Sutamati? Sāttaṉār feels that all these events do not merely make a fortuitous concourse, but happen according to a set pattern or order which is inevitable and which cannot be put by. Then the question is, "What is that pattern and how is it prescribed?" The only answer is that it is based on the past relationships of the characters concerned, in their previous births and their actions therein. Thus, the events in their present births are essentially linked with those of their past births as cause and effect, and so the poet tries to narrate all the happenings in the past births of the characters, and it is really admirable to see how he does it effectively. He introduces various persons for the purpose of revealing the births of the main characters, instead of making any particular individual do so. This adds to the interest of the story. Besides, the narrators of the past births also form an essential part of the epic as characters, and the poet takes pains to introduce them

also to us in as detailed a manner as possible. The narrators do not tell all that concerns them at a stretch, but they narrate the various events of their lives in different places as and when occasion demands and it is left to us to supply the links and form a connected story.

Further, among the numberless episodes in the Maṇimēkalai, the following are the dominant ones:

1. The story of Sutamati
2. The story of Dīvatilakai
3. The story of Āpputtiran
4. Kāyasaṇḍikai and Kāñchanan̲
5. Ādhirai and Sādhuvan̲
6. Māruthi
7. Visākai &
8. Pīlivaḷai

Now let us see how the episodes dealing with these characters strengthen the story element of the epic and contribute to its lasting fame. As the life-histories of the persons are too long to be mentioned here, an attempt is made only to refer to the context where they appear in the epic and to point out how their lives are connected with the main story.

1. SUTAMATI

Sutamati's present and past births are both mentioned in the epic in five different places.

First,[1] we find her telling Mādhavi that Maṇimēkalai should not go alone to the flower garden for culling flowers. To substantiate her point of view she goes into a reminiscent mood which is quite pathetic and says how she herself has been violated by a 'viñjaya' in the flower garden when all alone. Mādhavi realises the danger that lurks in the flower garden and sends Sutamati with Maṇimēkalai for company.

Next[2] we find Sutamati admonishing Utayakumaran̲ who languishes in his love for Maṇimēkalai and takes this

1 III. 26 to 43.

2 VI. 30 to 79.

opportunity to question her how she has come to stay with Mādhavi as a Buddhist; he has known of her only as a Jain seduced and betrayed by Mārudavēkan some time ago. Sutamati's reply is really amazing; it smacks of all the religious fanaticism of the age. The poet takes this opportunity to establish that the Buddhists are more noted for their mercy and kindness than the Jains. We need not enter into the controversy; be it what it may. What concerns us here is that the poet reveals all the early history of Sutamati, while she gives the reasons why she was given up Jainism and adopted Buddhism. Thus the character becomes a mouthpiece for the poet to tell her own story.

In the other contexts where Sutamati appears, we get glimpses of her past birth.

Maṇimēkalai[3] staying at the 'Uvavanam' is carried away by the goddess Maṇimēkalai. Sutamati is told about it by the goddess and then she proceeds to the Mandap or 'Ambalam' called 'Ulaga Aravi', where Kandirppāvai enlightens her on her past birth. Thus her intense grief caused by the separation from Maṇimēkalai is eased to some extent and she is made to submit herself to her lot in calm, and she goes, a sadder and wiser soul, to Maṇimēkalai, to acquaint her with what has happened. It will be seen now that Sutamati's relationship with Mādhavi and Maṇimēkalai follows inevitably as a result of the events in her previous births, which involved all the concerned characters. "Friendship free from any trace of ill-will and jealousy continues for all time, for all the seven births to come", says Tiruvaḷḷuvar[4]. Accordingly Sutamati is preordained to live with Madhavi who was but her beloved elder sister in her past birth.

Next[5] Maṇimēkalai comes to know of her past birth from the goddess Maṇimēkalai at Maṇipallavam. A reference is made about them to the past birth of Sutamati also. Tārai and Virai were the elder sisters of Ilakkumi (Maṇimēkalai in her past birth). Both are married to king Tucchaya. When

3 VII. 94 to 110.

4 Tirukkuṟaḷ 107.

5 X. 54 to 74.

they travelled north with their husband, they received the blessing of A̱ravaṇa Aḏigaḷ and worshipped the 'Pādapaṅkaya hill'. (the Hill or Lotus Feet)[6].

Thus Mādhavi and Sutamati are fortunate enough to do good deeds following the Buddha's teachings, only because of the worship of the Hill in their past births. Their life of devotion is also to be traced to a similar devotion to the Buddha in the past.

"Penance becomes those who are real penitents" so says the Tirukkuṟaḷ.[7]

Finally,[8] A̱ravaṇa Aḍigaḷ also informs Maṇimēkalai of Sutamati's life. Virai died in a drunken revelry, by falling before an elephant. Her beloved Tārai also sacrificed herself by falling from a terrace. This shows unbreakable bond of love that held so strongly the two sisters in their past births. It is this love and affection for each other that brings them together in their present births and unites them though they are actually born and brought up in different places as utter strangers.

2. DIVATILAKAI

Divatilakai is the Presiding Deity of Maṇipallavam who protects the island under the command of Indra. She reveals her life to Maṇimēkalai who stands before her after being enlightened regarding her past birth. Moreover, it is this goddess who shapes Maṇimēkalai's future in a different pattern; in fact the meeting with Dīvatilakai is a turning point in the history of Maṇimēkalai. Dīvatilakai may aptly be called 'charity incarnate'. "There is a divine pool". she says to Maṇimēkalai, where an unfailing bowl called Amudhasurabi will appear annually in the month of Vaikāsi on the full-moon day. "Today is the holy day and you will come by it, and the food served once into the bowl (by a truly chaste wife) will never be exhausted. Know more of the divine

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6 Like Christ who gave the sermon on the Mount of Sinai, Buddha taught his disciples standing at the tope of the Hill; hence the name.

7 Tirukkuṟaḷ 262.

8 XII. 31 to 54.

bowl from A̲ravaṇa Aḍigaḷ." Then the goddess details the ills of starvation and the consequences thereof, and finally exhorts her to feed all beings in need "That" she says, "Is the supreme virtue in action".

Of course, there is already visible a certain ascetic strain in Maṇimēkalai before she meets Dīvatilakai. She has given up worldly pleasures and she has known of her past birth; but it is only Dīvatilakai's advice that turns her life into one of pure dedication to social service. It would be interesting to note what would have happened if she had not met Dīvatilakai. Perhaps she might have just returned to Mādhavi without Amudhasurabi, by means of the powerful spells and continued to live a probably secluded life. Thus it is Dīvatilakai that inculcates a social sense in Maṇimēkalai who otherwise might have withdrawn from leading the life of a passive ascetic. Dīvatilakai tells her own story in another context.

Next,[9] when Puṇṇiyarajan (Aputtira<u>n</u> in past birth) and Maṇimēkalai stay in the island of Maṇipallavam, Dīvatilakai appears before them, shows the remains of Āputtira<u>n</u>, and reveals how Puhār has been destroyed by the upheavals of the sea and the reasons therefor. Thus Puṇṇiyarāja<u>n</u> comes to know of his past birth and of the demise of his other companions who voyaged with him in the vessel and Maṇimēkalai comes to know of the destruction of Puhār.

3. ĀPUTTIRA<u>N</u>

The former and second births of Āputtira<u>n</u> are mentioned in the epic in a detailed manner. Chapters 13 & 14 deal with the former, and chapters 15, 24 & 25 deal with the latter. A̲ravaṇa Aḍigaḷ tells Maṇimēkalai of all the details of Āputtira<u>n</u>'s life in the past, and we have already seen how the meeting with Dīvatilakai was responsible for a turning point in the history of Maṇimēkalai. It is Āputtira<u>n</u> who paves the way for Mañimēkalai to follow the path of virtue. Dīvatilakai shows the way, and thus she is the impelling force, and Āputtira<u>n</u> guides her in the way as an

9 XXV. 158 to 212.

unfailing light. It is he who leaves the Amudhasurabi in the divine pool of Kōmuki which he received from Chintā Dēvi of Madurai, and thus it is he who indirectly enables Maṇimēkalai to obtain it and do good to mankind. No wonder the poet devotes larger number of pages to the episode of Āputtiran̲ than to that of any one else.

The poet waxes eloquent in this context on the supreme virtue of feeding the poor, only to serve as a proper background for the story of Āputtiran̲. Asceticism, devotion to the Buddha, and wisdom that sparkles in religious discourses, all these are the prominent traits of Maṇimēkalai's personality. Above all, she wears "the eternal jewel of her soul", the supreme virtue-mercy which alone enables her to be charitable and feed the poor and this is her most brilliant achievement. Divatilakai talks gloriously of this social service, and points out the horrible consequences of unappeased hunger:

> "One who feeds all the poor in the world shall be deemed as their very life-giver"[10]

> "Hunger strikes at the root of the honour of the family; it ruins all the dignity and nobility of the individual; all his learning is rendered useless; it wipes away all delicacy of feelings and destroys all charm. It makes him turn his very wife to go with a begging bowl to other's doors".[11]

How will Maṇimēkalai be enabled to do this most virtuous deed but for Amudasurabi, and how will she obtain it but for Āputtiran̲ who has left it in the Kōmuki? Naturally our interest is aroused and we want to know of the unfailing bowl. Of course the poet more than fulfils his mission and satisfies our curiosity. He tells us not only of Āputtiran̲'s life and how he obtains the unfailing bowl, but also of his next birth when he is born as the king of Sāvakanāḍu. Now the question naturally arises as to why the poet takes pains to depict the birth to come of Āputtiran̲? Is it not

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10 XI. 95 to 96.

11 XI. 76 to 81.

enough if he has confined himself to the past birth, as in the case of other characters in the various episodes?

To answer this question, we must go back to certain events connected with Maṇimēkalai herself. It is A_ravana_ Aḍigaḷ who first gives her in detail the story of Amudhasurabi. He says that he has met Āputtiran_ at the time of his death in Maṇipallavam. When Maṇimēkalai hears of his death, she pines in uncontrollable grief as much as she has suffered inconsolable sorrow when she heard in the past of her father's (Kōvalan_) untimely death from her mother. Now let us see how she is consoled and relieved of her sorrow after hearing of her father's execution.

Kōvalan_ is executed by the king unjustly and Maṇimēkalai sobs aloud; the mother sends her to the garden for culling flowers, so that she might forget her sorrow. She goes to the Uvavan_am and thereafter her life traces entirely different and varied routes, quite unexpected in their turns. But in spite of her chequered career, marked by asceticism and devotion, there lurks in a corner of her heart, the sorrow caused by her father's death and it eats into her heart like a canker in the bud and never leaves her. Whenever she suffers being separated from her near and dear ones, there is a sudden uprush of this sorrow and filial piety, lying submerged as it were, in the inmost recesses of her heart. This serves to humanize Maṇimēkalai fully, For instance, when she is separated from Sutamati at Maṇipallavam, she weeps aloud, immediately, being reminded of her father.[12] Thus carrying her grief that can never be relieved, as a picture of sorrow she goes once to the city of Vañchi and offers worship to the statues of Kōvalan_ and Kaṇṇaki. She invokes Kaṇṇaki for her blessing and requests her to reveal her life after death.

Kaṇṇaki answers just to console Maṇimēkalai[13], "Both Kōvalan_ and Kaṇṇaki attained Heaven; however because of the great sin committed by her in burning the city of Madurai, Kaṇṇaki will be subject to a series of births and

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12 Ibid.

13 XXVI 10 to 60.

deaths, until she is destined to live in the city of Kapila with Kōvalan, worship Indira Vihar, gain wisdom at disciple of A̱ravaṉa and finally attain a birthless state". Thus Maṇimēkalai's curiosity regarding Kaṇṇaki and Kōvalan is satisfied and she is relieved of the burden of her grief.

Similarly she is distract with grief on hearing of the death of Āputtiraṉ who has led her in the path of virtue. Naturally she is eager to know of what happens to him after his death. It is but natural that she should sob aloud being separated from him. The poet has no other device but the same that he adopted earlier to console her. Therefore we find that he refers to the next birth of Āputtiraṉ and of his glories therein, and Maṇimēkalai has the unique opportunity of meeting him in his next birth and paying the first tribute to his glories. The soft and delicate nature of a woman who shows love and affection to all her fellow-beings is beautifully exemplified in Maṇimēkalai, and her inconsolable grief is but one aspect of her personality and the revelation of the future birth (or next birth) acts like a balmy-breath that blows gently on a festering wound and heals it miraculously.

4. KĀYASAṆḌIKAI AND KĀÑCHAṈAṈ

The story of Kāyasaṇḍikai and Kāñchaṉaṉ is to be found in chapters 15, 17 & 20.

Maṇimēkalai wanders in the streets with Amudhasurabi in hand, calling the starved ones to come to her and exhorting the chaste house-wives to give her alms.

She finds in the crowd, Kāyasaṇḍikai almost dying with starvation. Kāyasaṇḍikai has a premonition that somehow her hunger will be appeased if she approaches Maṇimēkalai. She directs Maṇimēkalai to a particular house which is that of a virtuous house-wife. In order to convince Maṇimēkalai of the truth of her statements, she expatiates on the the history and virtues of the house-wife. Maṇimēkalai then proceeds to the house of Āthirai, the virtuous woman and begs her to give alms. Once she receives it from Āthirai, she begins distributing it to the poor ones and finds that the food grows inexhaustibly as the wealth accumulated

by virtuous and fair means grows by distribution. Kāyasaṇḍikai addresses her as her mother, and requests her to redress her and Maṇimēkalai offers her but a handful, and she is absolutely relieved of her hunger. Then Kāyasaṇḍikai exclaims in gratitude that she is relieved of the suffering of endless hunger to which she became a victim as a result or her misdeeds.

Naturally, Maṇimēkalai's curiosity is aroused, and we too want to know who she is and how she became a victim of endless hunger that gnawed her entrails. The poet thus makes Kāyasaṇḍikai tell her own story in detail. In so far as she directs Maṇimēkalai to Ādhirai's house, she too plays an important part in the epic.

Next, we meet here husband Kāñchaṉaṉ (Chap.-20) in another context. He comes to the city of Puhār in search of his wife. The story takes an unexpected turn here packed with strange events. Maṇimēkalai takes on the form of Kāyasaṇḍikai just to escape the vicious clutches of Utaya kumāraṉ. Kāñchaṉaṉ is furious to see his "wife" being harassed by the Prince and that very night he stabs Utayakumāraṉ to death. Of course, this incident in the Maṇimēkalai is likely to give rise to various questions regarding poetic justice. No doubt Kāñchaṉaṉ commits a crime; but how else is Maṇimēkalai who leads an austere life of purity to be relieved of the pestering prince? There is no redeeming feature to be found in his unjust craving for Maṇimēkalai whom he knows to be an ascetic with absolutely no longing whatsoever for worldly pleasures. His lust is as unbounded as her austerity is and there can be no compromise and he will have to be sacrificed for glorifying the virtues of Maṇimēkalai, and Kāñchaṉaṉ serves as but a tool in the hands of the poet to achieve his purpose. Otherwise, either the king or the Sadukkappūdam will have to intervene, for, it is clear that the lustful prince is marked for death ever since he has begun chasing Maṇimēkalai. The sage at Sakkaravāḷakōṭṭam says to the Cōḻā king: "The lustful ones are doomed to destruction" and the Sadukkap pūdam also says that he allows but seven days of mercy to the wicked ones, and if they do not change by that

time, they will be killed by him.[14] Therefore it is clear that Utayakumāran cannot be put by the sword of justice, even if he were not killed by Kāñchanan. He has been then pre-ordained and doomed to death, and Kāñchanan is but the investment in the hands of bigger powers to carry out their will. Moreover he commits the murder by mistake and he unfortunately takes Maṇimēkalai to be Kāyasaṇḍikai. It shows his great lover for his wife; at the same time how can we blame him for mistaking Maṇimēkalai for his wife? She has taken on the form of his wife. Thus it is not his fault when he murders Utayakumāran, nor is it Maṇimēkalai's fault. It is fate that intervenes in the intricate affairs of these characters and Kandirppāvai consoles Kāñchanan saying that fate was responsible for the death of Utayakumāran.[15]

Moreover the poet suggests that the nature of his death is to be traced to the past events in the previous birth of Utayakumāran.[16] Kandirppāvai tells Maṇimēkalai that the cook employed by Rākulan, (Utayakumāran in his former birth) coming late to serve his master, fell down shivering in fear and the vessel with food broke to a thousand pieces; Rākulan became furious, took up his sword and cut off his head. This evil deed of Rākulan had its reaction in his present birth. Thus Kāñchanan is a tool in the hands of Nemisis and there is a kind of poetic justice when we reflect that the cook is as much unconnected with the personal life of Rākulan, as Kāñchanan is with the personal life of Utayakumāran.

5. ĀDHIRAI

Ādhirai's life is dealt with in the 16th chapter of the Epic.

We have already seen that Kāyasaṇḍikai tells Maṇimēkalai of Adhirai as the most virtuous housewife. As Maṇimēkalai demands, that a chaste woman should first give her alms to enable her to feed the starved ones with

14 XXII. 72 & 73.

15 XX. 123 & 124.

16 XXI. 45 to 71.

her Amudhasurabi, there is need for such a character appearing in the epic. Maṇimēkalai is a young ascetic, a perfect stranger in the city and naturally Kāyasaṇḍikai comes forward to tell her of Ādhirai, for, the latter has lived in the same place for a period of twelve years rotting in ceaseless hunger. The life of Ādhirai is but briefly told but it abounds in morals. It reveals the characteristics of a 'Kaṇikai' and Nagas, the fame of a scholar, and certain tenets of Buddhism like kindness to animals etc.; it is a veritable poem that sings the glories and triump[h of chastity. This episode of Ādhirai is a fine piece, sparkling with literary beauty and moral wisdom, and it is also here we find Sādhuvan̲ expressing the important teachings of the Buddha before the chieftain of the Nagas. As this is an epic based on Buddhism, Sādhuvan̲'s teachings naturally form an important part of the epic.

6 & 7. MĀRUTHI AND VISĀKAI

(The lives of these two people are mentioned in chapter 22).

After Utayakumāran̲ is stabbed to death by Kāñchan̲an̲, the sages of Sakkaravāḷakkōṭṭam hasten to announce the fatal news to the king. But at the same time they hesitate to mention it at once, for, they fear that the king may become terribly furious on hearing the news. So one of the sages proceeds to tell him first of two instances of persons who were murdered because of their foul sin of lust.[17]

First, Māruthi's story is given to point out the dire consequences of running after another's wife and then Visākai's story shows the evil consequences of the sin of violating a woman who has dedicated her life to asceticism.

Māruthi, the wife of a Brahmin, was loved by the younger son of the Gaganda king, while the elder son was infatuated with Visākai, an ascetic. The latter story is in consonance with Utayakumāran̲'s blind love for Maṇimēkalai and the stories of the two persons Māruthi and Visākai make the narration more interesting and they cannot be supposed to lessen the development of the main plot.

8. PĪLIVAḶAI

Maṇimēkalai is arrested and imprisoned by the king; but the queen, releases her. This kindly deed is only a prologue to a series of treacherous misdeeds by the queen, for she wants to slander Maṇimēkalai as far as possible. Maṇimēkalai remains unaffected by the harm done by the queen and the queen at last realises her invincible spirit and submits herself to her. Chitrāpathi, Mādhavi's mother, comes there at this time and demands the queen to entrust her grand daughter with her. Incidentally Chitrapathy tells the story of Pīlivalai. It is not absolutely relevant to the context.

The Cōḻā king should not fail to celebrate the Indira festival annually; otherwise the city of Puhār will be swallowed by the upheavals of the sea under the command of Goddess Maṇimēkalai.[18]

This apart, Mādhavi's daughter is named after the goddess and so if she is made to suffer, Chitrāpathi shudders to think of the consequences that will follow. Therefore she comes to release Maṇimēkalai and appraises Rājamā Dēvi of her fear. If the goddess were to become angry, it must be due either to the harm done to one bearing her name (Maṇimēkalai) or to the indifferent king who failed to celebrate the Indra festival, being infatuated with Pīlivaḷai. Of course, Rājama Dēvi has changed her mind even before Chitrāpathi's arrival. However, Puhār does not escape the curse that falls upon it and it is due to the second reason, and Dīvathilakai tells Manimekalai of the same in Maṇipallavam.[19] Thus the king's love for Pīlivaḷai is so overpowering that he forgets his obligations to Indra, and Puhār as a result is destroyed by the upheavals of the sea. The king leaves for another place after Puhār is destroyed and Aṟavaṉa Aḍigaḷ and Mādhavi leave for vāñchi. Thus Pīlivaḷai is indirectly responsible for bringing about a sudden change in the course of events of the main story.

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17 XXII. 19 to 24.

18 XXIV. 62 to 65.

19 XXV. 190 to 204.

It will be seen that all these episodes lend an epic grandeur to the main theme of Maṇimēkalai. They lend solidity to an otherwise flimsy and uninteresting themes and they are interlinked with the main story. Bereft of these episodes, the Maṇimēkalai will cease to be a full-fledged literary epic, and with them, it is an epic *par excellence.* The story element in the epic is strengthened by the episodes which thus form an inevitable part of the whole.

Chapter VIII

TREATMENT OF NATURE IN THE MAṆIMĒKALAI

SECTION A

Description of Nature and its Significance

Hills, Groves, Sandbanks and Bathing Ghats

The festival in honour of Indra or 'Indiraviḻā' is celebrated at Kāvirippūmpaṭṭiṉam every year with great enthusiasm and "eclat". On the eve of the festival a drummer hailing from an old family of drummers would announce the advent of the festival. Incidentally, he would also describe the beauties of nature abounding in Kāvirippūmpaṭṭiṉam. He has remarkable poetic skill and he chooses wonderful epithets to describe the mounds, flower gardens, sandbacks and bathing ghats. These epithets lose their significance when translated into English, for they contain a punning reference to the good and virtuous qualities of the people, besides being a description of the scenes. The drummer indirectly refers to the people's purity of mind, catholicity of outlood, kindness of heart and profound knowledge in the following lines:[1]

> "Veṇamaṇal Kuṉṟamum viripūm Cōlaiyum
> Taṇmaṇal Turuttiyum tāḻpūn tuṟaikaḷum"

(The *white* (symbolising purity) mounds of sand, the vast (symbolising vastness of outlook) flower gardens, the cool sand-banks of the rivers (standing for kindness) and the ghats abounding in groves (standing for depth of knowledge).

1 I. 64 to 65.

Flower-Garden

Sutamati and Maṇimēkalai go to Uvavaṉam, a fine flower garden to cull the fragrant flowers. They are surrounded by various admirers who wax eloquent in praising her beauty, her graceful gait, her semblances and her sweet words. By association of her person with her action in going to the Uvavaṉam, they are reminded of the swan, the peacock and the parrot that abound in the flower garden. 'Can the swan match her gait that reflects love and kindness? Can the peacock compare with her softness of heart and delicacy of feelings? Can the parrot learn to talk like her, moderately and gently, without ever indulging in tale-bearing, or gossiping or using harsh words or uttering lies? Thus the by-standers pay their tribute to Maṇimēkalai's grace and express their sympathies to the birds that suffer in comparison with the heroine.'[2]

The Grove

There is a wonderful grove in the Uvavanam. Thick shades are cast by the dense foliage of the numerous branches of the small trees in the grove. It is so densely wooded that even the small bodied 'Kuyil' *(cuckoo)* is forced to confine its freedom of flight and creep through the gaps. Darkness, personified as the enemy of the sun, is imagined to have taken refuge in the grove being afraid of the armies of the sun's rays. So dark is the grove where the thick foliage never allows the sunlight to creep in. Then the grove is imagined as the stage prepared for the dance recitals of the peacock; the buzzing and murmuring flies are said to sing in tune with the dance, in mellifluous notes of a flute; the monkeys are said to be the honoured spectators who enjoy the whole entertainment. Thus a wonderful picture of a natural opera is brought before our mind's eye in the description of the grove.[3] The following line is sweet with its fine music of assonance and balance:

"Veyilnuḻai paṟiyāk Kuyilnuḻaip Podumbar"[4]

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2 III. 150 to 158.

3 IV. 1 to 6.

4 Ibid. 5.

The Pool

There is a fine pool in the Uvavaṉam with crystal clear water. It is almost covered with green leaves of water plants over which dance the flowers of various hues. One of the flowers is a long-stemmed lotus on which is found a swan seated as a king on his throne in all his regal splendour. There is a peacock which spreads its green and bluish feathers on the bank and dances before the regal swan, as though it is a court dancer providing entertainment to 'His Highness'. The 'champan' cock gives his 'clarion call' which echoes the sounds of the 'muḻavu' or Mirudhaṅga. The cuckoo (Kuyil) in the branches of the trees fills the atmosphere with its melodious lays to the accompaniment of dance. Thus the pool is transformed into a fine piece where art flourishes as nature endows the place with her own orchestra.[4a]

The Lotus

As Maṇimēkalai has walked through the vast streets crowded with the traffic of chariots, her face resembling a lotus is now covered with dust and its lustre is gone. Similarly the lotus in the pool looks lustrelss covered as it is with layers of silvery pollen discharged from the full blossoms of 'Tāḻai' growing in abundance on the banks of the pool. This is a fine example to show how ingeniously the poet exercises his imagination by associating the world of Nature with the particular context in which he presents it. This description[4b] is also richly suggestive of the prosperity of the city and the fertility of the land. The ceaseless traffic of chariots in the streets suggests the wealth of the people in the city, as much, as the ceaseless discharge of the 'Tāḻai' pollen suggests the abundance of water and fertility of the soil.

Puhār

The city of Puhār is imagined as a graceful woman of exquisite charm. The moat in the neighbourhood near which the birds sing, forms the feet of Puhār adorned, as it were, with the sweet-sounding 'Silambu' or anklets. The many walls with battlements serve as the city's waistland,

4a IV. 7 to 13.

4b Ibid. 14 to 18.

decked with jewels. The fine archway near the entrance (the tōraṇa kambam) serves as her shoulders. The temples where the Kaṟpaga tree stands and the other temple where the 'Vacchirappaḍai' stands are both suggestive of the breasts of the city. The matchless temple of the Cōḻā king serves as her face. The full-moon rising in the east and the setting sun in the west are worn by her as the resplendant silver and gold ear-rings respectively, and her face thus shines in matchless lustre. The liner which give a description of the 'earrings' are the most poetical of all.[5]

"Kuṇatisai maruṅkil nalmutir matiyamum
Kuḍatisai maruṅkil ceṉṟuvil katirum
Veḷḷiveṇ tōṭṭodu Poṟṟōdāka
Eḷḷaṟu tirumukam Poliyōp peytalum"

The male swan

While female swan sports merrily in the water, a lotus droops its petals to hide it. Immediately the male swan pecks at the soft petals, tears them and triumphantly releases the bird from the fold of the flower. Then they fly joyously to the heights of a tall coconut trees and perch on its full-grown branches. This wonderful piece of drama enacted by the birds is allegorical in significance. A loving husband hurries to the rescue of his wife in troublous times and then lives in a world of joy, doing great deeds of virtue.

The female Aṉṟil

The male aṉṟil that leaves the female bird to search for food, does not return even in the evening. The female, aṉṟil is full of anxiety and so in her restless mood, she wants to suggest her longing to the male. Immediately she calls her beloved in a soft and tender tone and expresses her anxiety for his welfare.

This bird-episode brings not fully the sorry plight of a beloved separated from her lover and pining in thought. The pangs of separation as true lovers alone realise, are brought out here with fine pathos and a subtle and delicate beauty.

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5 V. 119 to 122.

Cows

The cows browsing on 'Kuvalai' flowers are reminded of their calves and drip milk wherever they go. This scene brings out the maternal instinct and suggests the selfless devotion of a mother to her child.

The Evening

A world of pure and selfless love is imagined peopled by men and women, by lovers, mothers, sons, teachers and disciples who shower affection on each other. The Brahmins do their 'hōmās' and the red tongues of flame leap forth; the housewives come out with the lamps; the 'pāṇās' or minstrels sing the lyrics pertaining to the arable lands while the cowherds (or Kōvalar) sing pastoral lyrics. At such a time evening descends on the city, with inconsolable grief wailing over the disappearance of the sun and pining like a palely loistering woman in woe. Evening is thus personified as a "Pasalai meyyātti" or "one with a languishing, pale body." It reminds the poet of the tragic picture of a widow who has just lost her husband[6].

"Amaraka maruṅkil kaṇavaṉai iḻantu
Tamarakam puhum orumakaḷ pōla
Katirāṟṟup paḍutta mutirāt tuṉpamodu
Antieṉṉum pasalai meyyāṭṭi."

Fruit bearing Trees

Āputtiraṉ does immense good to mankind with Amudhasurabi or the unfailing bowl gifted to him by Chindadevi. All the birds and the beasts surround him along with human beings. He goes on feeding all until the recipients feel wearied of his gifts, while those who are fed by him raise a shout of joy hailing his glory, and this shout is likened to the merry twittering and chirping of all kinds of birds after they have appeased their hunger with the ripe fruits yielded by the trees; and as the chirpings of birds perched on fruit-bearing trees flow ceaselessly, there is a ceaseless flow of applauding shouts around Āputtiraṉ.[7]

"Paḻumarattu indiya Paṟavaiyiṉ eḻūm
Iḻumeṉ summai idaiyiṉṟu olippa."

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6 V. 139 to 140.

7 XIV. 26 & 27.

The Sea-shore

Maṇimēkalai sleeps on the sands of the sea-shore in the island of Maṇipallavam and the poet gives a detailed description of the flower-bed on which she sleeps.

"In the Maṇipallavam surrounded on all sides by the rolling waves of the vast sea, on the fields of the ploughed shores bearing the seeds of conches and yielding pearls, near which roll the ceaseless waves full of red oysters, tumbling the big, fragrant logs of sandalwood and 'ahil' in the lowlying muddy field, shaded by the towering tree of *puli<u>n</u>aka ko<u>n</u><u>r</u>ai* on the banks of the deep pool where the lilies and 'Kuvaḷai' blossom together offering sweet food to the flies, under the perfumed canopy of flowers shaded by the wavy-trunked *Pu<u>n</u><u>n</u>ai,* and the large petals of the *Tāḻai,* a bed of flowers on the white sands as bright as moonlight"[8] The romantic and sensuous appeal of this part of the epic cannot be missed.

Night

When Utayakumāra<u>n</u> makes obeisance to Sambāpathy and takes a solemn vow, the goddess utters a few words and Utayakumāra<u>n</u> leaves the temple, being sure that he will know more from Maṇimēkalai's actions in the future, and night follows. The poet likens the night to an elephant.

"The elephant of dark night has the evening for its forehead; The crescent moon in the sky serves as the tusks; It runs fast uncontrolled by any mahout, spreading its proboscis of desire and copiously scattering the fluid (madanīr), sweet as the fragrance of flowers that blossom at night; it comes gradually triumphing in glory, rising like the wind and running amuck; it comes after having deposed the king of white rays' - the sun, to hold his sway over the vast kingdom of earth."[9]

The stage of nature[10]

The 'Kuyil' (cuckoo) sings; the peacock dances; the bees on branches of trees (Tumbi) produce the sweet

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8 VIII. 1 to 11.

9 XIX. 17 to 23.

10 XIX. 57 to 60.

humming sound of flutes; the bees hum like the 'Yāḻ'; all these entertainments feast the eye under the canopy of flowers.

Swans and Peafowls[11]

The male swan dances in the company of peafowls. This scene reminds the poet of the merry dance or 'Kuravaikkūttu' of Baladēva, Kaṇṇaṉ and Nappiṉṉai at Dwārakai. The white swan is likened to Baladeva, and the black blue peafowls are likened to Krishna and Nappinnai.

Puppet-show[12]

Besides, nature provides her own puppet show and tableaux. The peacock stirkes a fine pose near the mango tree covered with flowering creepers of 'Kōṅgu'; this reminds one of a graceful lady who feeds her pet parrot with the sweet milk in the golden vessel that she holds. The 'Kongu' flower is like the golden plate containing milk; the mango is compared with the parrot, the peacock with the lady.

The Monkeys[13]

The male of the monkeys puts the females on the fine swings decked beautifully and both enjoy the fun as a pair of lovers.

Bamboos and Kadamba trees[14]

The green leaved bamboos rub shoulders with the white flowered Kadamba trees, and this reminds one of Kaṇṇaṉ and Baladēva seen together.

Thus, the wonderful grove in the Uvavanam is described by the poet in most poetical terms.

The Sun

The sun is described in many places in the epic. The following lines are but a few of them noted for their poetic appeal.

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11 Ibid. 61 to 66.

12 XIX. 67 to 70.

13 XIX. 71 to 74.

14 XIX. 75 to 78.

"Ulaku Tuyil eḻuppiṉaṉ malarkatirōṉ"[15]

(The sun rays waked up the sleeping world)

"Ventāṟum poṉpōl Viḻkatir maṟainta
Antimālai"[16]

(The slanting rays of the setting sun like the liquid gold that has cooled.)

"Iruḷparantu kiḍanta malartalai ulakattu
Virikatir celvaṉ toṉṟiṉāṉ"[17]

(The sun appeared with his fast spreading rays and dispelled the darkness that encompased the vast spaces of the earth). We have already seen elsewhere how the moat surrounding the castle has been described by the poet.

Conclusion

It will be seen from the examples quoted above that the poet almost always tries to interpret the world of Nature in terms of human activity. In certain cases we come across bold and daring similitudes that sound almost metaphysical. Thus, the night being compared with the elephant, and the peacock striking a pose like a lady near the mango tree, are pictures wherein the comparison is obvious primarily in one point, but the poet finds it possible, with the shaping spirit of imagination, to fly into pure realms of poetry, and to present detailed comparisons of two apparently unconnected situation. Moreover, the ingenious choice of punning epithets and the equally ingenious comparison of trees and birds with Krishna, Baladeva and Nappiṉṉai, may look quite far-fetched to a foreigner who has no background of our culture and literary devices. On the whole, we do not find a mere wordy description of Nature in the Maṇimēkalai, but every piece of description is a fine poetic unit in itself; the more we reflect on it, the more beautiful it grows. But unfortunately when we render the same in English, however true the translation might be to the original, it loses its essential charm which is the mark of true poetry and which can be enjoyed in nothing but the original.

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15 190.

16 159 to 160.

17 75 to 76.

Section: B

THE FLORA AND FAUNA

Introduction

In any scheme of critical studies in literature, especially in those of an epic where descriptions in detail are but a necessary convention to be closely followed, a probe into the mysteries of nature depicted, particularly into the flora and fauna mentioned in it, is not only not uncalled for, but it becomes an inevitable function on the part of a true critic. So, a study of the plant as well as animal kingdoms as envisaged in the Maṇimēkalai has been attempted. Further, a detailed and critical account of the different plants and animals, both domestic and wild, or a biological survey of the epic at issue in relation to its socio-economic importance will be of great use for the proper assessment of the nature of civilization and culture of the people at a given time.

The Maṇimēkalai, as is well known, is in and through a Buddhist work. It is generally imagined that Buddhism is averse towards aesthetic consideration. This impression is the result of negativism. No doubt Buddhism despises all things earthly. But it very strongly pleads for gentleness, love, beauty, purity and softness. "The early Buddhists," according to Sri V.S. Naravane, "had an abounding love for the tender aspects of Nature. In their Viharas and Sangharamas, animals, birds, and flowers were nurtured with great solicitude."[1] So, Sāttaṉār, the author of the Manimekalai also abounds in describing Nature.

The flora and fauna, in their very nature, are closely inter-dependent. The animals owe their very existence to the presence of the plants. The plants supply them the necessary food materials. The birds and beasts in their own way have helped in the dispersal of seeds of flowering trees. Both the plants and animals have been an unfailing source of supply of valuable food-stuffs to mankind. In this connection, Sri M.S. Randhava, M.Sc. I.C.S, F.N.I., has

1 Illustrated Weekly of India Sep. 28 1958, p.40.

observed: "In[1a] human history we see the link of vegetation, animals and man clearly illustrated. Domesticated animals provide food material in the shape of meat and milk as well as power in an ancient civilization. The lower value was probably more important than their food value, and the degree of development of ancient civilization is closely related to the relative efficiency of the domesticated animals available in the country concerned." The domesticated animals like cows, bullocks, buffaloes etc., are of immense help to the people. The cattle have been through the ages considered as one of the best forms of wealth.

Plant habitat

Now then, the author seems to have observed the habitats of a number of plants. The gñāḻal[2] tree, fairly high, stands on the low muddy lands near the sea-shore. A grove of Puṉṉai trees stretches on the sandy land experiencing the impact of ceaseless waves, with salt-pans nearby. The Lotus, Kuvaḷai,Kaḻuneer and Āmbal are aquatic plants[2a] seen at the surface of the water. The Kuvaḷai and Neytal, the author has keenly noted, are found to be in co-existence in the same locality, namely the Kōmuki pond.[3] The Tāḻai grows on the bank of a tank and Lotus in water. The fragrant pollens of Tāḻai are carried by the wind so as to be sprinkled on the Lotus projecting above the water. This, the author compares to the face of a maid covered by the road-side dust[4].

Here a word on the pride of place among the flowers enjoyed by Lotus. Although flowers as a class are lovable, some have been glorified with special fervour - the lotus and the Kadambu. In the Buddhist legend and literature lotus is invariably associated with the Buddha figures. In this connection Sri V.S. Naravane, in one of his articles" In Praise of Indian Flowers" has observed: "The lotus symbol,

1a Everyday Science (Journal of the Northern Indian Science Association) Vol. II. No. 2 Jan. 1954 p. 100.

2 Maṇi. VIII. 6.

2a Ibid. XXVIII. 20.

3 XI. 38.

4 IV. 15 to 11.

once indicating the generative powers of the Cosmic Being, now also carried with Wisdom of Nirvana. As the austere, realistic Hinayana yielded place to Mahayana, with its profound mysticism and its rich aestheticism, the importance of the lotus went on increasing. The most popular of the Bodhi-sattvas, Padmapaṇi, carries a lotus; and Praina paramita, the highest personification of later Buddhism, is invariably surrounded by lotuses."[4a]

The prostrate neruñchi is dense in grassy lawns.[5] The green bamboo with its green foliage and the white kadambu with its white and bright flowers are seen in one locality.[6] The bamboo tree becomes scorched by hot sun and this appaling sight is adequately compared to poeple famine-stricken and starved.[7] This simile is very striking for, both bamboos and men are seen in groups and lose their freshness when affected.

Kuravam, Maravam, Kuriñji, Konrai, Tilakam, Vakuḷam, Veṭchi, etc., are some of the flowering and avenue trees usually found in pleasure gardens. The author mentions those trees to have been seen in and around the Uvavanam[8] where Maṇimekalai went togather fresh flowers for the worship of the Buddha along with her companion Sutamati.

Mention has also been made about seed germination. Generally seeds need proper soil and environment for development, and the seeds must also be good. The author compares Maṇimēkalai falling in love with Uthayakumāran to a good seed of Kandasāli, a kind of paddy, falling in an eroded and barren land.[9]

Habits of plants

The description of plants reveals the author's accurate observation of the various forms of plants. The

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4a Illustrated Weekly of India Sep. 28,1958, p.40.

5 XII. 60

6 XIX. 75

7 XIX. 91 to 93

8 III. 160 to 171

9 X. 46

coconut tree is tall;[10] and its leaves are large which bend and hang downwards.[11] The Pu<u>nn</u>ai is a highly branching and profusely flowering tree[12]. Vāgai grows into such heights that it enables clouds to settle down on its branches.[13] The trunk of Pu<u>nn</u>ai is curved,[14] that of Asōku[15] is massive and veṭchi's[16] is reddish. Tā<u>nr</u>i, Oduvai, U<u>l</u>iṅgai are trees which grow to great heights.[17]

Shrub plants[18] like Ko<u>nr</u>ai, Sūrai, Kaḷḷi and creepers[19] like Mullai and Vañji are also referred to by the author. His keen interest in Nature study is revealed in his descriptions of plant parts like leaves and flowers. The coconut leaf is fleshy.[20] The fleshy leaves of Tā<u>l</u>ai have curved thorns.[21] The margin of margosa leaf is serrated like the edge of a file.[22] The teak leaves have been used to keep things edible.[23]

Nature of Flowers & Pollination

The flower of Ilavam is red in colour.[24] The murukku flower is also red and the author brings in a simile which compares its colour and its thin long petals to the lips of a maid[25] Kāntal flower is red.[26] The flower of Pu<u>nn</u>ai are spotless pure white[27] The petals of lotus flower[28] are thick and those

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10 V. 26.
11 XX. 56.
12 III. 162.
13 VI. 83.
14 VIII. 9.
15 III. 164.
16 III. 161.
17 VI. 80.
18 VI. 81.
19 I. 46.
20 III. 98.
21 III. 163.
22 VII. 73.
23 XVII. 31.
24 III. 166.
25 XX. 51.
26 IX. 2.
27 XXV. 157.
28 XXIV. 39.

of Tāḻai are fleshy resembling leaves.[29] Trees flower only in certain seasons, and the author in mentioning the tree kadambam refers to its flowering season namely the inter-season.[30] Flowers are pollinated through insects. Āmbal and Kuvalai flowers stand staggering in deep tanks being pollinated through insects,[31] when they visit them for nector.

With a highly fertile imagination, the author, besides describing the structure of leaves and flowers, compares them to parts of the human body. Kumilam flower resembles the beautiful nose of a maid.[32] Maiden's eyes are pictured as kaluneer flower[33] and blue flower (Nilam) The thigh of a woman is described as the fleshy, smooth trucnk of aplantain tree. This changes into a condition resembling the trunk of talai when the thigh becomes lean and shrunk.[34]

Utility of flora

Also fruits have attracted the attention of the poet. The fruits of kamuku, plantain and palmyra are in the branches.[35] The naval fruit is sweet;[36] it resembles a palmyra fruit in shape and colour.[37] The coconut fruit, when it dries up, is wrinkled; and the body of an old man is compared to the wrinkled surface of the fruit[38]. The seeds of surai are compared to the glamourless teeth that have lost their pearly lusture and to proper arrangement.[39]

Further, the common plants and products used in day-to-day life have been mentioned by the author. Plantain with its bunch of fruits, kamuku, the tender vañji, the vaḷḷi climber with its flowers are used for decorating pandals

29 VIII. 9.
30 VI. 49.
31 VIII. 7 & 8.
32 XX. 48.
33 XX. 47.
34 XX. 61 & 62.
35 I. 46
36 IX. 17.
37 XVII. 30.
38 XX. 66 & 67.
39 XX. 49 & 50.

during festive occasions,[40] Coconut toddy was taken as a drink. Betels and nuts were taken after meals.[41]

The flowers of the kadambu tree are woven into garlands which are usually associated with Lord Muruga, the Kuriñji deity.[42] The Chōḻā kings wore Ātti garland as their symbol.[43] Garlands made of erukku and alari flowers were used by the insane people.[44] Maidens make garlands with the petals of fine, pinkish kaluneer flowers.[45]

The Nāval Islands refer to the place where large number of nāval trees are seen.[46] Places are thus named after the kind of trees that are found in large numbers like Nāvalam Dīvu. In this connection it is only proper to refer to Madurai which is associated with Kadambavaṉam, and Tillai (Chidambaram) with Tillai trees.

The author's picturesque description and superb observation with the open mind of a child of Nature in all its minute details is vividly seen here and there in the epic. Water standing stagnant near the shore, especially where a river joins the sea, not more than a foot or so in depth, is a common sight. At the bottom of such shallow back-waters of the sea, we can see numerous, slow-moving snails. As the snails move, they leave behind them furrows similar to those caused by a plough in the fileld. This the author depicts as a farm ploughed by snails and pearls sown to be reaped afterwards.[47,48] The appearance of a pleasure garden is visualized as a picture woven in a piece of cloth.

There is a profuse treatment of wild as well as domestic animals in the epic. Among the wild animals elephant, tiger, bear, jackal, monkey etc., are very often

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40 I. 46.

41 XXVIII. 243.

42 IV. 49.

43 IV. 50.

44 III. 104 & 105.

45 XIX. 88.

46 II. 1.

47 VIII. 3 & 4.

48 III. 160 to 168.

referred to. Of the domestic animals, mertion has been made about the cow, sheep, dog, horse, etc.

External Morphology

Now and then we find references made about the structural peculiarities of the animals. The dark, large, magnificent elephant with its long trunk is likened to a mountain with a hand.[49] When an elephant becomes ferocious and uncontrollable by the mahout, its eyes become reddened.[50] Its ears are described as the broad and flat flail.[51] Mention has also been made about certain natural markings found on the face of an elephant.[52]

In the description of a young cow, its large, beautiful and well-formed eyes have attracted the author of the epic.[53] The long face of the jackal,[54] the short legs of the mungoose,[55] and the long ears of the rabbit[56] have also been mentioned.

Behaviour

Regarding the habits of the animals, the author observes that horses run fast.[57] Sometimes elephants go astray. The deer leap and run quickly; the tigers look ferocious,[59] and they become active in search of prey.[60] The wild goat leads its life in a jungle and it never leaves it.[61] Thus, we see, in the author's treatment, his knowledge of animals in their original habitats.

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49 XXVI. 81.
50 IV. 46.
51 XIX. 121.
52 III. 142; VII. 115.
53 V. 130.
54 VI. 74.
55 XIX. 96.
56 XIX. 96.
57 IV. 45.
58 XXIII. 120.
59 XXVII. 69.
60 XX. 95.
61 XIX. 97.

The bear lives with its mate. The Nāga chief doing penance with his unshaven face along with his wife on a billock has been compared to a bear seen with its mate.[62] Tigers by nature are very ferocious and make an uproar in their attacks on their prey. A band of warriors who raise their voices in favour of their king's victory are spoken of as similar to a group of tigers.[63] The author has spared no pains in observing the social life of the animals in their natural environment. He presents a scene in a part where a male monkey puts his mate on a swing or a suspended seat intended for young maids and joyously rocks the same.[64]

Parental Care

Reference regarding parental care in the animal kingdom also finds place in this epic. The cows return lowing homeward in the evening to meet their calves.[65] This reminds us of Thomas Gray's famous line, 'The lowing herds wind slowly over the lea'[66] When the cows tread their way home, they pour the milk in their anxiety to feed the calves, and the milk thus sprinkled makes the dust settle down.[67] Cows are, by and large, docile and domestic animals. But when they give birth to young ones, they are apt to injure people, particularly strangers, in their anxiety to potect the offspring. This subtle behaviour of the domesticated cow has been closely observed by the author.[68]

The author has also mentioned about the training given to the newly added animals. The wild elephants, just brought from the forests, and the horses with gold chains were taken out for being trained for proper movements by the trainer.[69] These trained animals were engaged in warfare.[70] During the festive occasion announcements were

62 XIV. 68.

63 VII. 78.

64 XIX. 71 to 74.

65 V. 132.

66 Elegy written in a country courch yard 1-2.

67 V. 130, 131.

68 V. 46.

69 XXVIII. 60, 61.

70 VII. 99, XVIII 140.

made by beat of drum. The drums were clothed with bull's skin. The drum was placed on the back of an elephant duly decorated with ropes around the loins.[71] The author seems to have evinced keen interest in the behaviour of animals at different times. His observation, especially of animals early in the morning, just before the sun-rise, is superb. Elephants with markings on their faces in the stable make long calls; the domestic cocks with erected feathers crow; the inactive and sleeping horses, standing in rows in the stable, become active and tap the ground with hoofs; the birds, on the branches of trees, begin to sing; the bees that suck the nector from the flowers produce a humming noise.[72] These apart, we come across a number of passing reference about several other animals like donkey, dog etc.

Birds & their songs

In the scheme of things in Nature, the birds do play an important role. As such we see, in the epic of our present study, a large number of references being made about birds also. Birds, because of their richness and vareity in their colours, and the melodious sounds they produce attract people in general, and authors and poets of Nature in particular. To cite a few instances, the swan is referred to as the red bird;[73] the peacock is described as a bird having a charming plumage with many an eye-bright spot; the singing cuckoo that lives on the branches is of shining black colour;[75] the parrot, the voice of which is very often compared to the sweet voice of the maiden, is green[76]. The cuckoo whose voice is more familiar than its form makes a sweet call of a peculiar kind[77]. The author also mentions about the voices of two kinds of cocks. Of these, the voice of one resembles the beat of a drum,[78] and that of the other is short and shrill.[79]

71 I. 28. 29.

72 VII. 115 to 119.

73 V. 129.

74 XIX. 68.

75 IV. 13.

76 III. 166, XIX. 70.

77 Ibid.

78 Ibid.

79 VII. 116.

The queer notes of certain birds are associated with certain possible misfortunes and bad omen. Such sentimentally objectionable notes of birds have been often mentioned in the Sangam literature also. The call of the owl is supposed to signify an approaching death. In addition to this, the author also mentions a number of other notes of birds in a burial ground; The bubo or the wood owl, a carnivorous bird, also makes a bad note; andali, another carnivorous bird which is said to resemble the head of a man, is described to have a special taste for the brain of the dead, and this bird, too, produces a bad and inauspicious note.[80] Such minute references only go to show that 'the poets must have been great lovers of birds or mythologists, for the intimate knowledge of their ways and habits displayed could have been the outcome of long-continued and keen observation.[81] In the Vedic and other Sanskritic works also, such references are found mentioned very often. Chariots drawn by mules are described in Granta Sutras. Bees forming honeycombs and ants forming anthills inside the house or in the garden have already come to be regarded as omens. Mention is made of wolves and jackals, and the barking of dogs or the howling of jackals heard near an ashrama is considered inauspicious.[82]

Feeding behaviour of animals

The food habits of animals vary very much. The author's mention about this fact is also noteworthy. The jackal picks up a limb of a dead body from the burial ground and eats it with immense pleasure; the dogs, the hawks and the eagles are all animals eating flesh.[83] Certain birds are piscivorous. The kingfisher laments its failure in catching its prey, the red fish, darting in water.[84] The insects suck the nector from the corella. The butterfly goes from the flower to flower in scarch of honey.[85] Apart from these

80 VI. 75 to 77.

81 The treatment of nature in Sangam literature p. 313 by Dr. M. Varadharajan.

82 Flora & Fauna in Ancient India in Sunday Standard (Indian Express) dated January 31, 1960.

83 VI. 110 & 117.

84 IV. 22 to 24.

85 XVIII. 19, 20.

detailed descriptions we find here and there mere mention of some other birds by their names like mu<u>l</u>uval[86] and cillai.[87]

Among the reptiles, snakes are very often referred to. The author mentions about snakes having poisonous eyes.[88] This does not seem to have any scientific evidence or corroboration. When a snake becomes ferocious, it expands its hood, and opens its mouth exposing the poisonous teeth.[89] There is also a reference to the snake having lost its precious gem.[90] This the zoologists do not accept as a fact. The snakes resorting to their holes and the crocodiles remaining in water also have been mentioned.[91]

Habits of Reptiles and Fishes

Of the aquatic animals, crocodiles and fishes have attracted the poet's attention. Among[92] fishes, carp and the dark carp[93] have been noted. The external form of the carp is pictured to have excelled the leaf of a spear.[94] This description is very apt, because a vertical section through the body of any aquatic animal including the fish exactly resembles the spear-head. The only other fish that is mentioned here is the I<u>r</u>ā.[95]

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86 VIII. 29.
87 VIII. 29.
88 IX. 49, XXIII. 84.
89 XX. 104.
90 VII. 131.
91 XX. 80, XXVIII. 18.
92 IV. 22.
93 XVIII. 75.
94 Ibid.
95 XX. 46.

Chapter IX

THE AUTHOR AND HIS AGE

In the history of Tamil Literature we come across several Sāttaṉārs with one or more epithets being prefixed to their names and this has given rise to quite a lot of confusion as to who is the real author of the famous epic, the Maṇimēkalai. The prefatory verses, both in the Maṇimēkalai and in the Silappatikāram respectively run as follows:

"Iḷaṅgo Vēntan aruḷik Kēṭpa
Valaṅkeḻu Kūla Vānikañ Sāttaṉ
Māvaṇ Tamiḻttiṟam Maṇimē kaḷaituṟavu,
Āraim Pāṭṭinuḷ ariyavait taṉaṉeṉ."[1]

(In the august presence of Iḷaṅgo, the prosperous 'grain merchant' Koolavaṇikaṉ Sāttaṉ narrated this story of Maṇimēkalai tuṟavu' in 30 chapters).

"Uraiyiḍai iṭṭa pāṭṭuḍaic ceyyul
Uraicāl aḍigaḷ arula Madhuraik
Kūla Vāṇikaṉ Sāttaṉ Kēṭṭaṉeṉ."[2]

(The Epic composed in verse interspersed with prose passages, was narrated by the famous Iḷaṅgo Aḍigaḷ in the presence of Kūlavāṇikaṉ Sāttaṉ of Madurai.)

From these verses, we have two Sāttanārs namely, Kūla Vāṇikaṉ Sattan and Madurai Kula Vāṇikaṉ Sāttaṉ. In both the cases 'Sāttaṉ' is the proper name of the poet. In the former, the prefix 'Kūla Vaṇikaṉ' means a grain merchant; in the latter the poet's name is preceded by another prefix

1 Maṇimēkalai Patikam, 11. 95 to 98.

2 Silappatikāram Patikam, 11. 87 to 89.

'Madurai', besides 'Kūla Vāṇikan̲', Madurai is the place where the poet Sāttan probably carried on his business. So these two names 'Kūla Vāṇikan̲ Sāttan' and 'Madhuraik Kūla Vāṇikan̲ Sāttan̲' can be safely construed to denote one and the same person namely "Madhuraik Kūla Vāṇikan̲ Sāttan̲."

The Traditional View

While the prefaces of the two epics referred to above, speak of Madhuraik Kūla Vāṇikan̲ Sāttan as the author of the Maṇimēkalai, the late learned Pin̲n̲athūr Nārāyāṇasāmy Iyer,[3] the commentator of Nar̲r̲iṇai and the late lamented Sri U.V. Swaminatha Iyer,[4] the famous editor and commentator of the Sangam works including the Maṇimēkalai have mentioned Madhuraik Kūla Vāṇikan̲ Cīttalai Sāttan̲ār as the author of the epic at issue. Of these two learned scholars, the former had taken 'Cīttalai' to denote the name of a village, while the latter took it for a human limbe namely diseased head marked by ceaseless flow of pus. One of the popular commentators of the Tolkappiyam, Cēn̲āvaraiyar[5] by name, had also meant by Cīttalai a limb with pus. Both Cēn̲āvaraiyar and Dr. U.V. Swaminatha Iyer had probably based their conclusions on unbelievably and inconceivably fabricated tale, and an interpretation of a line in the verse composed by the poet Maruttuvan̲ Tāmōtaranār which runs: "Talaik Kuṭṭut tīrvu Sāttarkku"[6], According to them, this line means that Tiruvalluvar's Muppāl (Tirukkur̲aḷ) had cured Sāttan̲ar's headache. Here in this reference, his headache need not have been necessarily due to the pus in his head. One may contact headache due to too much of concentration on a problem, mental agony and so on. So, the contention of these two scholars loses ground and what Pin̲n̲athūr Nārāyaṇaswāmy Iyer took it for, stands unassailed namely that the term 'Cīttalai' denotes a village in the Perambalur Taluk of the Tiruchirappalli District, Madras State.

3 Nar̲r̲iṇai p. 42 edited by P. Narayanaswamy Iyer

4 Maṇimēkalaip. XXII edited by Dr. U.V. Swaminatha Iyer

5 Tol. Col. 174 (Commentary)

6 Tir̲uvaḷḷuvamālai 11

Surnames in the Sangam Age

The Sangam celebrities were invariably known not merely by their own proper names. but with appropriate honorific terms or suitable epithets being prefixed to their names. Instances in this regard are found in numbers. U̲raiyūrppalkāyan̲ār, Kaḍiyalūr Uruttiran̲ Kaṇṇan̲ār, Kāṇakkāyan̲ Tattan̲ār, Ōrēr U̲lavan̲ār are but a few in point. These epithets have been employed severally to signifiy the place, the calling or occupation, the implement or instrument used and so on. This sort of naming the persons and poets was in vogue in the ancient past. The following sūtram in the Tolkāppiyam bears ample testimony to this:

"Ūrum Peyarum Uḍait-to̲lil Karuvirum
Yārum Cātti Yavaiyavai perumē"[7]

(The personal names were prefixed by names of native places or names of the implements connected with their occupation.)

It is only in keeping with this convention, Ṣāttan̲ār also had been named and known as Madhuraik Kūlavāṇikan̲ Cittalai Sāttan̲ar'. In his long name, three epithets are found namely, 'Madhurai', 'Kūlavāṇikan̲' and 'Cittalai', Of these, 'Madhurai' and "cittalai' denote two place names in Tamilnadu. In this connection Dr. S. Somasundara Bharathi observes: "In the galaxy of poets mentioned in the 'Eṭṭuttokai' Series or the Eight Collections, no other poet has been named with twin epithets, dentoting the place, and since these twin epithets 'Madhurai' and 'Cittalai' have not been invariably and uniformly employed before his (Sāttanar) name through and through, and the few places where they have been used must have crept in there, due to the slip of the seribe"[8] He, therefore, contedns that Madhuraik Kūla Vāṇikan̲ Sāttan̲ figuring in the Eṭṭuttokai works is a different poet[9] He further argues, in defence, that the two prefaces have not mentioned 'Cittalai', and the author of the epic is called 'Sāttan̲' whereas the other poet is honourably called

7 Tol. Poruḷ. Marapu 74.

8 Sentami̲l Vol. 40 No. 9 p. 311.

9 Ibid. pp. 311 & 312.

'Sāttanār'. Dr. Bharathi's statement and the arguments advanced thereof need careful consideration and scrutiny.

Dr. Bharathi's Views

Now let us take up Dr. Bharathi's points one by one. His contention, that no poet other than Madhuraik Kūlavāṇikan Cittalai Sāttanār had been named with two epithets both denoting place names, does not hold good. Madhurai Nāṭṭup pūtantēvan, Kaccip pēṭṭuk Kāñchik Korran, Uraiyūr Ēṇiccēri Mudamoosiyār, Kōnāṭṭu Ericcilūr Mādalan Madhuraik Kumaranār are but a few celebrities in; point whose names have been prefixed with more than one epither. As regards his other argument that the name 'Sāttan' has been uniformly and invariably mentioned in the Sangam works with the two prefixes namely 'Madhurai' and 'Cittalai' and that therefore by the sheep slip of the seribe these epithets must have crept in, in certain, plances, we have to collect the several verses and poems found in the Eight Collections with the names of the poets against them. The following are the verses sung by Sāttan with different epithets;

i. Kuruntokai — Stanza 154 - Maturaic Cittalai Sāttan
   Kuruntokai — Stanza 346 Sāttan

ii. Narriṇai — Stanza 36, 127, 339 Cittalai Sāttanār

iii. Akanānūru — Stanza 53, 134 - Cittalai Sāttanār
   Akanānūru — Stanza 229, 306, 320 - Madhuraik Kūlavāṇikan Cittalai Sāttanār

iv. Puranānūru — Stanza 59 - Madhuraik kūlavāṇikan Cittalai Sāttanār.

v. Tiruvaḷḷuvamālai Stanza 10 - Cittalai Sāttanār

Here a collection of 12 stanzas has been given along with the poets against each. If all these different names are sorted and classified, the following order can be found.

i. Sāttan (Kuruntokai) 349 - 1 stanza only

ii. Çittalai Sāttanār (Narriṇai 36, 127, 339) Akam 53, 134, Tiruvaḷḷuvamālai 10) - 6 stanzas

iii. Madhuraic Cittalai Sāttan̲ (Kur̲untokai 154) 1 stanza.

iv. Madhuraik Kūlavāṇikan Cittalai Sāttan̲ār (Akam 229, 306, 320 Puram 59) 4 stanzas.

The four-fold names shown above are either with no epithet or with a single epithet denoting a place or with double epithets denoting places or with treble epithets denoting the place and the occupation of the poet. On an examination of these four slightly different names, the poet Sāttān̲ devoid of any epithet should have originally belonged to Madurai. Cittalai Sāttan̲ār and Madhuraic Cittalai Sāttan̲ can be considered as one and the same poet. Thus the poet, though born and brought up at Cittalai, moved to the capital ofthe Pandiya Kingdom for his life' activities. Madhuraik Kūlavāṇikan̲ Sāttan̲ār is yet another poet who also belonged to Cittalai, but settled at Madhurai and took to merchandise, besides being a poet. Thus, we come across three different Sāttan̲ārs. They are,

i. Sāttan̲ (otherwise Madurai Sāttan̲)

ii. Madhuraic Cittalai Sāttan̲

iii. Madhuraik Kūlavaṇikan̲ Cittalai Sāttan̲

Another argument of Dr. S.S. Bharati is that the nominal terminations 'an̲' and 'ār ' go to differentiate 'Sāttan̲' from 'Sāttan̲ar'. These terminationa need not constitute a serious and solid reason for classification. It is possible that the same poet might be mentioned as Sāttan̲ or Sāttan̲ār on different occasions according to the whims and fancies of the writer.

Iḷaṅgo Aḍigaḷ makes a reference to a poet in his epic by name "Taṇḍamiḻ Āsan̲ Sāttan"[10] Some are inclined to think that this poet is the author of the Maṇimēkalai. This seems to be far from the truth. Of the three Sāttan̲ārs arrived at above, Madhuraic Cittalai Sāttan̲ may be the poet that is referred to by Ilango, since he has omitted 'Kūlavāṇikan̲' from his name. Further the epithet 'Āsān̲' means a teacher or a preceptor. If he should be praised in such a high degree by Iḷaṅgo Aḍigaḷ he should have been a superb

10 Silap. Kathai 25. 1-65.

scholar poet. Madhuraic Cittalai Sāttan̲ had sung seven beautiful verses in the Eṭṭutokai works which entitled him to be rememberd by Aḍigaḷ. So far, we have discussed the different names of the poets and now we have to arrive at a decision as to which of these Sāttan̲ārs is the author of the Maṇimēkalai, the epic of our study here.

Dr. U.V. Swaminatha Iyer and Pin̲n̲atūr Nārāyaṇa swāmi Iyer did not envisage several Sāttan̲ārs and the probably considered all of them as one, and so both of them had ascribed the authorship of the Maṇimēkalai to Madhuraik Kūlavāṇikan̲ Cittalai Sāttan̲ār. Sri Mayilai Seeni Venkataswamy[11] also concurs with these scholars in regard to the authorship. Dr. S.S. Bharthi[12] maintains that Madhurai Kūlavāṇikan̲ Sāttan̲, as found in the Patikams, is the author of the epic, and Cittalai Sāttan̲ār was contemporary of Āriyappaḍai Kaḍanta Neḍunceḻiyan̲, whereas Madhuraik Kūlavāṇikan̲ Sāttan̲, the author of the Maṇimēkalai was contemporary of Pāṇḍyan̲ Naṇmāran̲ (one who died at Cittiramāḍam) who was a later king[13] The late Prof. S. Vaiyāpuri Piḷḷai[14] held that the poet Cittalai Sāttan̲ār of the Sangam period was different from the author of the Maṇimēkalai, but he did not specify the name of the author of this epic.

On the basis of style, diction, mode of presentation and the outlook on life, we are inclined to feel that the Maṇimēkalai was not composed either by Sāttan̲, or by Madhurai Cittalai Sāttan̲ār or by "Taṇḍamiḻ Āsān̲ Sāttan̲'. Till further research repudiates beyond doubt, we may for the present concur with Dr. S.S. Bharathi in holding that *Madhuraik Kūlavaṇikan̲ Sāttan̲ was the author of the Maṇimēkalai.* He was a confirmed Buddhist, as is evidenced by his epic, entertaining very strong feelings, and prejudices against other religions, especially Jainism. As for Cittalai Sāttan̲ār of the Sangam Age, nothing is definitely known about his creed.

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11 Bauttamum Tamiḻum pp. 101 & 102.

12 Sentamiḻ Vol. 40 No. 9 p. 310.

13 Ibid. p 312.

14 Kāviyakālam pp. 150 & 151.

Significance of 'Sāttan̲'

Now a little elucidation of the name 'Sāttan̲' is not out of place. Some scholars like Sri Mayilai Seeni Venkataswamy[15] opine that the term 'Sāttan̲' is a derivative of the Sanskrit word 'Sāstha'. Sāstha is said to be one of the many names of the Buddha. It is also said that people in ancient times named their children after the Buddha as 'Sāttan̲'. Further, Sri Seeni Venkatasamy holds that almost all poets whose names ended with 'Sāttan̲' must have been Buddhists.[16] On the other hand Pandit Sri A. Kandasamy Pillai held that Sāttan̲ and 'Kor̲r̲an̲' were pure Tamil names.[17] 'Sāttan̲' means a big leader of tradesmen. So also 'Kūlavāṇikan̲ Sāttan̲' can be taken to mean a leader of a group of community of grain merchants. In support of my view the following lines from the ancient Sangam works may be quoted.

"Taṇarccevik Kaḻutaic Sāttodu Vaḻaṅku"[18]

"Vēr̲r̲umun̲ai Vemmaiyir̲ Sāttuvan̲ Tir̲uṭṭēn̲a"[19]

"Atar̲keḍut Talar̲iya Sāttoḍu"[20]

In all these three quotations the term 'Sāttu has been used to mean a group of merchants. So 'Sāttu' was a widely prevalent Tamil word and the name 'Sāttan̲' the author of the Maṇimēkalai may also be considered to have been employed in this conventional sense'.

The age of the Author

It is a sorry state of affairs that we are not able to assess the literary productions of the Tamil geniuses and celebrities that belonged to the ancient as well as the mediaeval periods in terms of history and chronology. This fact stares one in the face when one remembers that they had moulded the Tamiḻian life in a splendid manner in almost all spheres of human activity. A biographical study of an

15 Bauttamum Tamiḻum p. 170.

16 Ibid.

17 Tamiḻ Poḻil Tuṇar 1. Malar 5 p. 170.

18 Perumpaṇār̲r̲uppaḍai 1.80.

19 Kur̲unthokai 390.

20 Akanān̲ūr̲u 39.

author will greatly enable the reader to understand his mind and to estimate his contribution to the sum-total of human knowledge.[21] Neither the authors nor the commentators and critics did attempt to give sufficient clues regarding their life-histories; so much so that the dates of almost all poets of repute are riddles yet to be solved by researchers. This does not mean that the Tamils lacked in them a certain historical sense only; they did not care for differentiating the historical from the fanciful. So, for want of reliable and undoubted historical evidences, the chronology of most poets differs greatly in point of time between scholars and critics. In this connection Dr. M. Winternitz has observed, "Even to-day the views of the most important investigators with regard to the age of the most important Indian literary works, differ, not indeed by years and decades, but by whole centuries, if not even by one or two thousands of years"[22].

Evidences

In regard to the fixation of the age of the author of the Maṇimēkalai, we have to make a proble into the study of all available sources. The evidences may be grouped under two categories, the internal and the external. Of these two kinds of evidences, the internal evidences found in the work are the most reliable. One clear reference found in the Maṇimēkalai is in respect of a couplet in the Tirukkuṟaḷ and its author. The author of the Maṇimēkalai had employed the couplet[23] in its entirely with a glorious tribute to Tiruvaḷḷuvar. The following are the lines.[24]

"Deyvam Toḻāl Koḻunaṉ Toḻuteḻuvāḷ
Peyyeṉap peyyum perumaḻai eṉṟavap
Poyyil pulavaṉ poruḷurai Tērāy."

(Waking up, she worships no other deity than her husband; readily at her command it rains; so says the poet who

21 Sentamiḻ Vol. 33 No. 3 H. 81 & 82.

22 A History of Indian Literature pp. 25 & 26.

23 Tirukkuṟaḷ 55.

24 XXII. 59 to 61.

knows no lying) Here the author of the Maṇimēkalai not only made use of Kuṟaḷ couplet in toto, but also he had praised Tiruvaḷḷuvar with the title 'Poyyil Pulavaṉ' (one who never utters a lie). From this it is crystal clear that the Maṇimēkalai is later than the Tirukkuṟaḷ in point of time. But again the age of the Tirukkuṟaḷ has not been fixed beyond doubt. To try to find out dates of the Tirukkuṟaḷ will lead one to a still greater and deeper research. So, we have to resort to some other internal evidence in the Maṇimēkalai.

A reference to the King Karikālaṉ is found in the Maṇimēkalai.[25] He was one of the most powerful monarchs of the Cōḻā dynasty. According to Prof. K.A: Nilakanta Sastry. "The period of Karikālā's rule must be sought towards the end of the second century A.D. His chronology is closely bound up with that of the Sangam and cannot be put as late as the fourth or fifth century A.D. as has sometimes been done."[26] Since this reference clearly shows that the peirod of the king Karikālā was a little anterior to the actual story told in the Maṇimēkalai, the age of the author under study may be slightly put later than the period of Karikāla. During the reign of Karikālā. Puhār was in all its glory. But during the time of the author of this work it had suffered destruction. So, Sāttaṉār, the author of the Maṇimēkalai must have definitely lived after the end of the second century A.D. This may be taken to be the upper limit of his age.

But, the difficulty arises in fixing the lower limit of his dates. Here scholars are sharply divided in their opinions. The late Prof. S. Vaiyapuri Pillai pushed the author down to about 800 A.D. due to the following reasons[27].

1. The author of the Maṇimēkalai had consulted the Nyāyā of Dignāgar, for the Buddhist logic expounded in the Maṇimēkalai was adopted from the Nyāyā. Since Dignāgar lived in the fifth century A.D. Sāttaṉār must have come after that date.

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25 I. 39.

26 'The Hindu' weekly Magazine, October 2nd 1960.

27 Kāviya Kālam pp. 126 to 141.

2. In the Maṇimēkalai, the word 'Kuccara Kuḍikai' has been used. 'Kucchara' denotes Gūrjarā (Gujarat) or the people who belonged to the country. This name became prevalent only at about the sixth century A.D. So, Sāttan̲ must have lived after the date.

These are the very important arguments, among others, advanced by Prof. S. Vaiyapuri Pillai.

With regard to the first argument, it has already been pointed out in this thesis in a previous chapter that the Nyāyā of Dignāgar was not followed by Sāttan̲ār and in fact, the Nyāyā was a later work than the Mañimēkalai. The Maṇimēkalai followed the Aristotelian model of syllogism and not that of Dignāgar. The late Prof. Tirunarayana Iyengar, after a critical and comparative study of the Nyāyā and the Mañimēkalai had concluded that the Nyāyā did not precede the Maṇimēkalai in time. He had given the following arguments.[28]

1. All that is said from lines 47 to 110 of the Maṇimēkalai is mostly not dealt with in the Nyāyā.

2. In the beginning of the Nyāyā the eight 'fold' patārta gñān̲a' is referred to as the subject matter of the work. But, this is not mentioned in the Maṇimēkalai. Instead only two 'Pratyaksham' and 'Karuttu' are mentioned.

3. That which is found in the beginning of the Nyāyā is not found in the Maṇimēkalai; and that which is found in the Buddhist logic in the beginning is not mentioned in the Nyāyā. This is an important point of difference between the two works.

Regarding the second argument of Prof. S. Vaiyapuri Pillai, 'Kucchara' cannot be undoubtedly taken to mean 'Gūrjarā'. For, the auhtor of Maṇimēkalai, as has already been pointed out in a previous chapter of this thesis, refers to the people of Magadha, Avanti, Yavan̲a etc., but not the Gūrjarās as experts in the art of building. 'Hence the interpretation that 'Kucchara' refers actually 'to the Gūrjarās

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28 Sentamil̲ Vol. XXXII No. 2 pp. 27 & 28.

is at the very best doubtful. Very probably the name Gūrjarā itself is derived from a Tamil or Dravidian word 'Kucchara'...... In any case with the present knowledge of this particular question no decisive inference is possible"[29] So, the attempt to push forward the date of the Manimekalai to a much later period does not bear fruit.

The Maṇimēkalai speaks about the important cities of the Tamil country. They are Puhār, Madurai, Vañchi and Kāñchi. Regarding Vañchi and Kāñchi, detailed accounts are given about their various aspects. Nowhere in this work reference is made to the Pallavas. The Pallavas had Kāñchi as their capital. The advent of the Pallavas is dated about the third century A.D.[30] As the Maṇimēkalai clearly indicates that Kāñchi was a Cōḻā viceroyalty under Iḷam Kiḷḷi, it might have been written before the advent or supremacy of the Pallava Kings. Secondly, the Maṇimēkalai speaks about the Hinayana (this fact has been already discussed in a previous chapter of this thesis) and not the Mahayana expounded by Nāgārjuṉa, who is said to have lived in the third century A.D.[31]

So, in the light of the religious as well as the historical evidences both internal and external so far mentioned, we are inclined to conclude tentatively that the author of the Maṇimēkalai probably lived at about the beginning of the third century A.D.

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29 Maṇimēkalai in its historical setting p. 51 by Dr. S. Krishnasamy Ayyangar.

30 Pallavas of Kāñchi p. 36 by R. Gopalan.

31 Tiruvaḷḷuvar Kālam Yātu p. 16 by Dr. M. Rajamanikkam.

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